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MEMOIRS OF ERNEST II

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CONTENTS

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CHAPTER I

CONVERSATIONS OF THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS WITH SIR HAMILTON SEYMOUR.—CHARACTER OF THE EMPEROR.—HIS INFLUENCE ON THE EUROPEAN CABINETS.—LOUIS NAPOLEON.—HIS PRIVATE LIFE IN ENGLAND.—HIS ELECTION AS PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.—FIRST SYMPTOMS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SECOND EMPIRE.—PRINCE ALBERT'S DISLIKE OF NAPOLEON.—THE GREAT EXHIBITION IN LONDON.—DEATH OF SIR ROBERT PEEL.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—THE ECCLESIASTICAL TITLES' BILL.—THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF COBURG IN LONDON.—SUCCESS OF THE EXHIBITION.—ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PRINCE ALBERT'S MERITS.—POLITICAL EFFECT OF THE EXHIBITION.—ENTENTE CORDIALE BETWEEN FRANCE AND ENGLAND.—THE COUP D'ÉTAT IN PARIS.—LORD PALMERSTON'S APPROVAL AND FALL.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—LORD DERBY'S MINISTRY.—FEAR OF BONAPARTISM.—LETTERS FROM KING LEOPOLD OF BELGIUM TO PRINCE METTERNICH.—SYMPATHY IN ENGLAND WITH ITALY.—INDIGNATION AGAINST AUSTRIA.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—SEQUESTRATION OF THE PROPERTY OF THE ORLEANS IN FRANCE.—THE DUKE CALLED UPON TO PROTEST.—PRINCE ALBERT APPROVES.—LOUIS NAPOLEON'S MARRIAGE PLANS.—DONA EUGENIA MONTIJO.—VISIT OF THE DUKE TO LONDON.—NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRINCE ALBERT RELATING TO THE DOMAINS OF COBURG AND GOTH A.—THE DUKE OF GENOA, THE NEW KING AND QUEEN OF HANOVER, AND THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF PRUSSIA, AT THE ENGLISH COURT.—THE CAMP AT CHATHAM.—THE ABERDEEN MINISTRY.—THE ORIGIN OF THE EASTERN QUESTION.—LETTERS FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—PALMERSTON'S RESIGNATION AND RETURN.—THE WAR POPULAR 1

CHAPTER II

THE YEAR 1854.—CHANGE IN THE DUKE'S POLITICAL ATTITUDE.—HIS JUSTIFICATION.—THE POSITION OF THE GREAT POWERS.—RUPTURE BETWEEN FRANCE AND RUSSIA.—THE TREATY OF FRANCE AND ENGLAND WITH TURKEY.—THE WAR WITH RUSSIA.—THE COBURGS SUSPECTED OF SYMPATHISING WITH THE EASTERN POWERS.—ATTACKS IN THE ENGLISH PRESS ON PRINCE ALBERT.—KING LEOPOLD OF BELGIUM AND LOUIS NAPOLEON.—THE DUKE OFFERS TO GO TO PARIS.—LETTER FROM KING LEOPOLD.—THE DUKE'S VISIT TO PARIS ARRANGED.—PRINCE ALBERT'S DISPLEASURE.—CORRESPONDENCE.—THE DUKE GOES FIRST TO BERLIN.—HIS MEMORANDUM TO KING FREDERICK WILLIAM IV.—THE RUSSIAN PARTY IN BERLIN.—KING LEOPOLD SETS FORTH THE POINTS TO BE DISCUSSED WITH THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON.—THE DUKE IN PARIS.—HIS FRIENDLY RECEPTION.—KING JEROME.—IMPRESSIONS AT THE COURT.—THE EMPEROR AND EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH.—CONVERSATIONS WITH NAPOLEON.—THE EMPEROR'S ANXIETY FOR AN ALLIANCE WITH AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA.—HIS WILLINGNESS TO MEET PRUSSIA'S WISHES.—DISCUSSIONS ON THE PLAN OF OPERATIONS.—NAPOLEON'S FUTURE PLANS.—HIS KNOWLEDGE OF BERLIN AFFAIRS.—HIS PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE KING OF PRUSSIA.—PRINCE CHIMAY.—THE ENDEAVOURS OF THE EMPRESS EUGENIE TO DRAW THE DUKE ON THE SUBJECT OF QUEEN VICTORIA AND PRINCE ALBERT.—THE DUKE'S DILEMMA.—THE CHARACTER OF LOUIS NAPOLEON.—THE DUKE'S VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT 39

CHAPTER III

EFFECT OF THE DUKE'S STAY IN PARIS.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—THE DUKE GOES TO BERLIN.—KIND RECEPTION BY THE KING.—STRONG LETTER FROM QUEEN VICTORIA TO THE KING OF PRUSSIA.—THE APRIL TREATY BETWEEN PRUSSIA AND AUSTRIA.—FREDERICK WILLIAM IV SEEKS TO CONCILIATE THE EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.—BUNSEN'S RESIGNATION, BONIN'S DISMISSAL, AND THE PRINCE OF PRUSSIA'S DISAGREEMENT WITH THE KING.—PRINCE ALBERT ON THE CHEVALIER DE BUNSEN.—THE KREUZZEITUNG PARTY IN BERLIN.—PARTICULARS OF THE RUPTURE BETWEEN THE KING OF PRUSSIA AND HIS BROTHER.—HOW BONIN WAS DISMISSED.—LETTER FROM THE PRINCE OF PRUSSIA TO THE DUKE.—THE DUKE PROPOSES TO GO TO VIENNA.—THE SITUATION THERE.—LETTER FROM THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA TO THE DUKE.—THE RUSSIAN PARTY IN VIENNA.—UNCERTAINTY OF AUSTRIA'S INTENTIONS.—FAR REACHING PLANS.—THE DUKE'S NAME MENTIONED IN

CONNECTION WITH THEM.—THE EMPEROR FRANCIS JOSEPH.—HIS CHARACTER AND VIEWS.—PRUSSIA'S INDECISION CAUSES HIM UNEASINESS.—WHAT HE THINKS OF NAPOLEON AND HIS PROJECTS.—PRINCE METTERNICH.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—COLONEL VON MANTEUFFEL ARRIVES IN VIENNA, AND THE SKY BECOMES OVER-CAST.—THE RACE BACK TO BERLIN.—COLONEL VON MANTEUFFEL GETS THE START OF THE DUKE.—CURIOUS RECEPTION OF THE DUKE BY THE KING.—CONVERSATION WITH MINISTER VON MANTEUFFEL.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—THE FOUR POINTS.—THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE.—WRATH OF THE KING OF PRUSSIA.—HIS LETTER TO THE DUKE.—THE PRINCE OF PRUSSIA TO THE DUKE.—DEATH OF THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS 79

CHAPTER IV

A COUNCIL OF WAR IN PARIS.—THE TONE IN THE FRENCH ARMY.—THE FIRST ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE COMBINED FLEETS.—THE ALLIED ARMIES IN GALLIPOLI.—LETTERS FROM PRINCE CHIMAY TO THE DUKE.—THE SIEGE OF SILISTRIA.—RUSSIA'S MISFORTUNES IN TURKEY.—THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON'S PATIENCE WITH AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA.—MISMANAGEMENT OF FRENCH MILITARY AFFAIRS.—DISSATISFACTION IN FRANCE.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—THE SPANISH REVOLUTION.—ITS EFFECT ON NAPOLEON.—LETTER FROM PRINCE CHIMAY TO KING LEOPOLD OF BELGIUM.—THE FIRST IDEA OF THE EXPEDITION TO THE CRIMEA.—PRINCE ALBERT'S SHARE IN IT.—LETTER FROM THE PRINCE.—PRINCE ALBERT'S VISIT TO NAPOLEON AT BOULOGNE.—LETTER FROM THE DUKE TO PRINCE ALBERT.—THE BATTLE ON THE ALMA.—RUMOURED FALL OF SEBASTOPOL.—THE ENGLISH ARMY AND THE BATTLE OF INKERMAN.—THE FOREIGN LEGION.—DIFFICULTIES OF THE SITUATION.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT TO THE KING OF BELGIUM.—LETTER FROM NAPOLEON TO THE DUKE.—HE COMPLAINS OF THE WANT OF ENERGY ON THE PART OF THE ENGLISH COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.—DEATH OF THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS.—FRESH NEGOTIATIONS.—AUSTRIA LEAVES THE WESTERN POWERS IN THE LURCH.—LETTER FROM COUNT BUOL TO THE DUKE.—VISIT OF THE EMPEROR AND THE EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH TO ENGLAND.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT ON ENGLISH POLITICAL AFFAIRS.—PRUSSIA AND THE CONFERENCES IN VIENNA.—LETTERS FROM THE KING OF PRUSSIA AND HIS BROTHER.—THE DUKE IN PARIS AND LONDON.—HIS LETTER TO THE KING OF PRUSSIA.—REPORT OF PRINCE WILLIAM OF BADEN ON THE CONDITION OF RUSSIA.—THE STORMING OF SEBASTOPOL.—THE THEFT OF RUSSIAN DESPATCHES IN BERLIN.—THE END OF THE WAR 135

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST PARIS EXHIBITION.—THE QUEEN AND PRINCE ALBERT IN PARIS.—THE DUKE'S OPERA SANTA CHIARA PERFORMED AT THE GRAND OPERA.—CONVERSATIONS WITH NAPOLEON.—HIS SUFFERINGS AND PHYSICAL DECAY.—BITTERNESS AGAINST AUSTRIA.—THE DUKE AND THE AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR.—THE DUKE'S LETTER TO COUNT BUOL.—COUNT BUOL'S ANSWER.—AUSTRIA SUBMITS AN ULTIMATUM IN ST PETERSBURG.—THE KING OF PRUSSIA'S UNWILLINGNESS TO MEDIATE.—HE SUPPORTS AUSTRIA'S ULTIMATUM.—PARIS CHOSEN AS THE SEAT OF THE FUTURE CONFERENCES.—ENGLAND ATTEMPTS TO EXCLUDE PRUSSIA.—LETTER FROM THE DUKE TO PRINCE ALBERT.—THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON'S SATISFACTION AT THE CONCLUSION OF PEACE.—HIS LETTER TO THE DUKE.—RUSSIAN INTRIGUES.—BIRTH OF THE PRINCE IMPERIAL.—THE DUKE ON THE SITUATION	190
--	-----

CHAPTER VI

NEW FAMILY ALLIANCES.—PRINCESS VICTORIA'S BETROTHAL TO FREDERICK WILLIAM OF PRUSSIA.—FIRST INDICATIONS OF THE MATCH.—ENGAGEMENT OF THE PRINCE REGENT OF BADEN TO PRINCESS LOUISA OF PRUSSIA.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—THE ENGAGEMENT IN ENGLAND KEPT SECRET.—ATTACKS ON PRUSSIA IN THE ENGLISH PRESS.—THE FEELING ON THE PROPOSED MARRIAGE IN BERLIN.—INDEPENDENCE OF THE KING OF PRUSSIA.—DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BELGIUM AND FRANCE.—KING LEOPOLD'S JUBILEE.—MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCE REGENT OF BADEN AND PRINCESS LOUISA OF PRUSSIA.—THE DUKE CHOOSES A WIFE FOR THE SON OF THE DUKE OF AUGUSTENBURG.—MARRIAGE OF PRINCE FREDERICK WILLIAM OF PRUSSIA AND THE PRINCESS ROYAL.—LETTERS FROM PRINCE ALBERT AND THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF PRUSSIA.—CHARACTER OF PRINCE FREDERICK WILLIAM AND THE PRINCESS ROYAL.—THE DUKE'S INFLUENCE ON THE YOUNG PRINCE.—MARRIAGE OF THE ARCHDUKE MAXIMILIAN OF AUSTRIA AND PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF BELGIUM.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—MARRIAGE BETWEEN KING PEDRO OF PORTUGAL AND PRINCESS STEPHANIE OF HOHENZOLLERN	229
---	-----

CHAPTER VII

GENERAL SITUATION AFTER THE CRIMEAN WAR.—NAPOLEON'S CONTINENTAL PLANS.—ENGLAND'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEM.—THE FRENCH REGENCY LAW.—THE PROPOSED UNION OF MOLDAVIA AND	
--	--

WALLACHIA.—LETTER FROM THE DUKE TO PRINCE ALBERT.—THE PRINCE'S ANSWER.—RUSSIA PROPOSES TO SUMMON THE POWERS TO AN AFTER-CONFERENCE.—NAPOLEON'S ITALIAN POLICY.—ENGLAND'S DISAPPROBATION.—COOLNESS BETWEEN FRANCE AND ENGLAND.—LETTER FROM PRINCE CHIMAY.—PILGRIMAGE OF EUROPEAN PRINCES TO PARIS.—THE GRAND-DUKE CONSTANTINE IN PARIS.—EFFECT OF HIS VISIT IN ENGLAND.—THE EMPEROR AND THE EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH IN OSBORNE.—HOW NAPOLEON INFORMS PRINCE ALBERT OF HIS INTENDED MEETING WITH THE EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—CAVOUR AND NAPOLEON.—THE PLOTS OF THE POLITICAL REFUGEES.—THE DUKE IN PARIS.—THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON ON THE POSTAL AND RAILWAY SYSTEM.—THE ATTEMPT ON THE EMPEROR'S LIFE AT THE GRAND OPERA.—ITS POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND.—LETTERS FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—THE QUEEN AND THE PRINCE IN CHERBOURG.—RECONCILIATION BETWEEN NAPOLEON AND PRINCE JEROME.—NAPOLEON'S SECRET TREATY WITH SARDINIA.—AUSTRIA'S ISOLATION 229

CHAPTER VIII

THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON'S WORDS TO THE AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR AT NEW YEAR 1859.—THEIR EFFECT.—LETTER FROM PRINCE CHIMAY TO THE DUKE.—THE DUKE'S ANSWER.—NAPOLEON'S DESIRE TO SEE THE DUKE IN PARIS.—KING LEOPOLD'S LETTER ON THE SUBJECT.—THE WAR UNPOPULAR WITH THE FRENCH NATION.—NAPOLEON DETERMINED.—OPPORTUNITY FOR PRUSSIA.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—THE DUKE'S LETTERS ON THE SITUATION TO THE PRINCE AND KING LEOPOLD.—NAPOLEON BELIEVES THE HOUSE OF COBURG TO BE WORKING AGAINST HIM.—THE DUKE IN BERLIN.—LORD COWLEY'S MISSION TO VIENNA.—PRINCE ALBERT'S POLITICAL LETTER TO THE PRINCESS OF PRUSSIA.—RUSSIA PROPOSES A CONGRESS.—CAVOUR AND NAPOLEON.—THE DUKE TAKES UP HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH COUNT VON BUOL.—THE COUNT'S LETTER.—THE DUKE IN LONDON.—HIS IMPRESSIONS THERE.—PRUSSIA UNWILLING TO TAKE DEFINITE ACTION, UNLESS ENGLAND GUARANTEES THE NEUTRALITY OF THE NORTH SEA AND THE BALTIC.—THE ENGLISH CABINET DECLINES.—THE MEMORANDUM OF THE PRINCESS OF PRUSSIA TO THE ENGLISH COURT.—FEARS OF A UNIVERSAL WAR.—PRINCE HOHENZOLLERN SUMS UP THE SITUATION IN BERLIN 266

CHAPTER IX

THE KING OF SARDINIA'S LETTER TO THE EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH.—AUSTRIA COMMENCES THE WAR.—INADEQUACY OF HER FORCES.—

THE FRENCH ARMY.—WILLISEN'S MISSION TO VIENNA.—NEGOTIA- TIONS BETWEEN PRUSSIA AND AUSTRIA.—THE BATTLE OF MAGENTA, AND NAPOLEON'S ENTRY INTO MILAN.—EFFECT IN ENGLAND AND PRUSSIA.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—THE DUKE'S REPORT TO QUEEN VICTORIA.—PRINCE ALBERT ANSWERS.—THE BATTLE OF SOLFERINO.—NAPOLEON'S DESIRE FOR PEACE.—THE TRUCE OF VILLAFRANCA.—AUSTRIA'S DOUBLE-DEALING WITH PRUSSIA.—LETTER FROM THE PRINCE REGENT OF PRUSSIA.— AUSTRIA'S CIRCULAR NOTE TO THE GERMAN GOVERNMENTS.— PRINCE ALBERT ON THE SITUATION	296
--	-----

Memoirs of Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha

CHAPTER I

CONVERSATIONS OF THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS WITH SIR HAMILTON SEYMOUR.—CHARACTER OF THE EMPEROR.—HIS INFLUENCE ON THE EUROPEAN CABINETS.—LOUIS NAPOLEON.—HIS PRIVATE LIFE IN ENGLAND.—HIS ELECTION AS PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.—FIRST SYMPTOMS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SECOND EMPIRE.—PRINCE ALBERT'S DISLIKE OF NAPOLEON.—THE GREAT EXHIBITION IN LONDON.—DEATH OF SIR ROBERT PEEL.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—THE ECCLESIASTICAL TITLES' BILL.—THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF COBURG IN LONDON.—SUCCESS OF THE EXHIBITION.—ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PRINCE ALBERT'S MERITS.—POLITICAL EFFECT OF THE EXHIBITION.—ENTENTE CORDIALE BETWEEN FRANCE AND ENGLAND.—THE COUP D'ÉTAT IN PARIS.—LORD PALMERSTON'S APPROVAL AND FALL.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—LORD DERBY'S MINISTRY.—FEAR OF BONAPARTISM.—LETTERS FROM KING LEOPOLD OF BELGIUM TO PRINCE METTERNICH.—SYMPATHY IN ENGLAND WITH ITALY.—INDIGNATION AGAINST AUSTRIA.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—SEQUESTRATION OF THE PROPERTY OF THE ORLEANS IN FRANCE.—THE DUKE CALLED UPON TO PROTEST.—PRINCE ALBERT APPROVES.—LOUIS NAPOLEON'S MARRIAGE PLANS.—DONA EUGENIA MONTIJO.—VISIT OF THE DUKE TO LONDON.—NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRINCE ALBERT RELATING TO THE DOMAINS OF COBURG AND GOTHIA.—THE DUKE OF GENOA, THE NEW KING AND QUEEN OF HANOVER, AND THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF PRUSSIA, AT THE ENGLISH COURT.—THE CAMP AT CHATHAM.—THE ABERDEEN MINISTRY.—THE ORIGIN OF THE EASTERN QUESTION.—LETTERS FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—PALMERSTON'S RESIGNATION AND RETURN.—THE WAR POPULAR.

IN the famous conversations of the Emperor Nicholas with the English Ambassador, Sir G. Hamilton Seymour, at the beginning of the year 1853, occasion offered to indicate plainly

enough the attitude of Russia and England towards the rest of the Powers. The Emperor treated politics like a geometrical problem, drawing from the parallelogram of the revolutionary forces in France, Italy, Austria, and Prussia, the resultant force, and reasoning with startling consistency and simplicity that, in like wise as England's supremacy at sea could not be contested, so were he and his holy Russia destined to rule the European continent. In offering to the Ambassador of the British Empire the division of the 'sick man's' inheritance, he thought himself entitled to leave the rest of the continental Powers, as mere dependents on his will, all but entirely out of account.

When, after the lapse of a year, the English published Seymour's despatches, the Prussian and Austrian statesmen read with shame and amazement the expression of the contempt which the Emperor Nicholas had manifested with regard to his good friends in Berlin, and more particularly those in Vienna. All at once a picture was mirrored to them from the Neva, in which they had to recognise themselves in their dependence on the will of the all-powerful Czar. He expressly declared the possibility of any attempt on their part to emancipate themselves from him, to be an almost childish assumption of the English Ambassador.

The Emperor Nicholas was really the last actual autocrat in Europe. I reckon it as one of my most instructive experiences and reminiscences to have obtained of the most remarkable man of my time a personal impression, which, through my connections with many persons who stood in the same degree of relationship to him and to me, I was at all times able to add to and complete.

But it was indeed necessary to have received immediate impressions of him, in order to form an adequate idea of a despot nature, such as the world hardly produces any more to-day. In the person of the Emperor Nicholas all vague abstraction of State, Church, and Nationality, disappeared. Men saw him, and rested assured that everything powerful expressed in these ideas was he himself in person. Next to him nothing existed, nor did anything seem able to exist. The

indefinable Muscovite bugbear, by whom the imaginations of the civilized nations are from time to time tortured, vanished at his appearance. He stood a tangible being, with no frightful form, but rather beautiful and glorious, enticing and seductive, firm, bold, and like a kind of religious guardian spirit, before the adoring world. And this colossal phenomenon of an absolutely ruling mind, proved on closer inspection—a mere outward sham, a painted picture.

He was the most perfect uniform wearer among all the European sovereigns, a model for every kind of parade exhibition. His principle of living and ruling was uniform and formality. He represented both the statesman and the general in so eminent a degree, that his perfect qualification for both offices appeared to everyone, as it were, a matter of course. He effected all and everything by the innate great sense which is expressed in the term, 'nimbus of the autocrat.' He managed to preserve this nimbus, in the most brilliant manner, better than any one of the contemporary emperors and kings. But with equal skill he was capable of giving to the social expressions of his feelings a trait of a certain good-naturedness, which corresponded to the change of the uniforms of his wardrobe.

Above all things he understood how to take one aback, and his gallant and chivalrous bearing had a fascinating influence on men and women alike.

His influence was everywhere and nowhere, like the wandering Jew, who is for ever roaming through the world. Men listened on all sides, directly or indirectly, to St Petersburg, and even in the most insignificant of actions the sole consideration was what the Czar would say to it. The Russian embassies were everywhere at work with counsel and kind intentions, enquiring discreetly, but answering all the more firmly. Great Governments at last began to feel this tutoring from St Petersburg as a sort of necessity. I confess that the ever-increasing state of dependence of so many Governments had for years been working up my feelings to the highest pitch. It had become evident to me that, unless all hopes for Germany were to be resigned, the

first thing to be accomplished was the destruction of Russian influence. However, to get anyone to share this opinion proved then a difficulty, which in our days is almost incomprehensible. Even with a Sovereign so entirely unbiassed as King Leopold I never arrived at an understanding on this point, not to speak of many other men who appeared absolutely incapable of understanding in what Russia's injurious influence on the state of Europe consisted.

Under these circumstances it was only too conceivable that the mighty Czar looked upon old England as the sole factor with which he had to reckon in his great Eastern plans. He was well aware, indeed, how little favourably the English Sovereign and her Consort were disposed towards him, and in the Cabinet sat for the most part men who were everywhere in alliance with the enemies of Russian power, and who supported the revolutionary movements. But the Czar could not free himself from the notion that by a few concessions, such as the possession of the Island of Candia, and the like, he would draw the English Government over to his side. But even if this calculation had been less mistaken than it actually was, the Emperor Nicholas ought never to have overlooked the fact that the France of the Revolution of 1848 was no longer to be compared with the Empire of 1853.

It will suffice here to recall in a few words the well-known facts of French history since the downfall of Louis Philippe. Little as had been the faith in the permanence of republican institutions in France since the June battles of the year 1848, still the remainder of Europe could not make up its mind to regard the inconvenient revival of Bonapartism as possible. The bearer of the name and traditions of Napoleon had left, since the days of Strasbourg and Boulogne, too unfavourable a memory for people to regard him as qualified to play the role of his uncle in France. He had made manifold attempts to establish for himself a social position in England, but he was at first only able to interest a very small portion of the aristocracy in his person. It proved particularly prejudicial to him that the Queen refused to receive him, and that he was in consequence, as it were, banished from all Court

circles. The general opinion was that Louis Napoleon was a dull and insignificant man. His mode of living, moreover, was looked upon as hardly commendable. I had the opportunity of seeing and conversing with him several times in London, in the houses of his not very numerous acquaintances, and I must confess to having, at that period, been not quite free from the general prejudice against him, although it would be in the highest degree unjust to assert that his personal bearing was in any way unpleasing. I once had a more intimate meeting with him, on the occasion of purchasing horses in London, and this chance event left upon us both a firm and lively remembrance of our first encounter in life.

When, at the end of 1848, the French Republic, in accordance with the statute of the constitution, was about to proceed to the election of a President, it was Louis Napoleon's principal advantage that, with the exception of General Cavaignac, who was violently disliked among the workmen, and all but entirely unknown to the rural population, there could be no question of any serious rival. Notwithstanding, there was no end to the amazement in Europe, when Louis Napoleon appeared on the list of candidates for the presidency.

It had not been noticed how carefully and systematically the Napoleonic legend had been cherished in the whole of France, nor what sums of money had been lavished in canvassing for the bearer of that great name. When it at last became evident, the fact was regarded as the less comprehensible the more men knew that the bearer of the illustrious name had never enjoyed a pecuniarily favourable position, but had actually been harassed in London by the most petty cares of life.

The 10th of December, 1848, resulted in a number of five-and-a-half million votes in his favour, and the new President now prepared his way slowly and carefully, avoiding everything that might cause uneasiness to monarchic Europe. Partly in remembrance of the history of his great uncle, and partly in consideration of the threatening situation of the Apennine Peninsula, the belief prevailed that the aggressive Napoleonic tendencies would take shape first of all in the

plains of Lombardy. But the President of the Republic opposed no obstacles to the victorious progress of the Austrian army in Piedmont. He not only did nothing that could endanger Austrian possessions, as secured by the battle of Novara, but he declared and proved himself, on the contrary, the guardian and restorer of the Papal throne.

This attitude of Napoleon was sufficient, in the period of reaction, to turn the opinion of a considerable portion of the diplomatic world in his favour. His tours in France, and his manifold public and private speeches, no doubt managed to remind the newspaper reader at every moment that the President of the Republic was the author of the *Idées Napoléoniennes*. But his Ministries and his ambassadors inspired the Governments more and more with confidence in his conservative principles. His parliamentary bills were of a kind to rejoice the hearts of the most reactionary German ministers: Raising of the newspaper caution-moneys; limitation of the electoral franchise; severe measures of deportation against political prisoners; all this seemed a fine and praiseworthy commencement of a vigorous government, as men then expressed it. It was already no longer rare to hear from the lips of the most reactionary people words of sympathy with the little nephew of the great uncle, as Victor Hugo had first called him.

His military banquets, indeed, found less favour; still less the reports of various thoughtless public demonstrations, at which the 'Emperor' was cheered. Moreover, it was particularly suspicious that the President himself at times spoke of himself as of the one who represented the will of the people, and who, in case of need, would not draw back, should France impose a greater burden upon him. Thus the year 1851 approached, and the symptoms of the establishment of the second Empire increased in an alarming degree.

From all parts of France the demand came for a revision of the Constitution, and the President made no secret of the fact that he, too, considered such a revision necessary. The Chamber still kept the Republican banner aloft, but it was liable to fall at any moment.

In this state of things serious politicians could no longer leave the question unanswered, as to what attitude would have to be taken up towards the rising monarchy. Not only the Cabinets and the Ministries, but more immediately the Courts and the reigning families of Europe, were called upon to decide what line of conduct they would pursue with regard to the new Sovereign of France.

The reigning Sovereigns were much troubled in mind, as to whether they might resolve to bestow upon the new Emperor the title of brother.

Curiously enough, Napoleon found, just at those two Courts whose principles of government were most opposed to one another, in Russia and in England, the very greatest repugnance and the most obstinate resistance to his ambitions. My brother was not only an opponent of the Napoleonic traditions and of the Empire, in virtue of his very decided theoretical convictions, but he was at that time also particularly unfavourably disposed towards the representative of these ideas himself.

Although Albert was fond of entering into relations with all sorts of personages who had permanently or temporarily chosen England as their home, if it had fallen to their lot to play a part in the political or literary world on the Continent, yet he had never experienced the desire to enter into connection with Louis Napoleon. In former days no points of common interest could be found between the two men, hence even the President of the Republic was kept at a cool distance. The intimate intercourse between the English Court and the closely related Orleans may not have been without some influence in preventing this personal antipathy from becoming softened, even when Louis Napoleon was already regarded as the man of the future, and English policy seemed to demand a friendly advance to the new regime.

My brother was at that moment preparing for the greatest deed of his life, and was working with all his might at the scheme of the Great International Exhibition, which was his idea and his merit, and which has insured his name a place for all time to come in the history of European civilisation.

Although the President of the French Republic was the first who with full intelligence took up my brother's great idea, who furthered it in every way, popularised it in France, and contributed without question much to the success of the great work, yet even this did not materially better his own position with the English Court. I think that I owe it to historical truth to recall these facts with all the greater impartiality the more friendly the treatment which the Emperor, until his end, and, after his death, those he left behind him, have since met with at the hands of the English Court.

In England all foreign questions had now receded into the background before the preparations for this great Jubilee of Nations, as, in allusion to the ancient jubilee years once decreed by the Popes, the first International Exhibition has been termed. The conception, development, and execution, of this great idea have been so elaborately and exquisitely described that it would be impossible to say anything new to the reader on that score.* The difficulties, too, which Albert encountered with the powerful Protectionists of the kingdom, and the disgusting ill-will against the fertile mind of the German man, which had not yet been overcome in stiff English circles, has been admitted by English historical writers themselves with laudable impartiality.

When Robert Peel so unexpectedly died, my brother entertained grave fears for his great enterprise, and expressed to me, probably with greater frankness than he could in England, how many difficulties his opponents were causing him. Thus he wrote on July 4, 1850:

‘We are unfortunately plunged into the deepest mourning, for a blow has struck us, from which we are not likely soon to recover. Peel is a loss for the whole of Europe, a dreadful one for England, but an incalculable one for the Crown and for us personally!! The manner of his death was so sad too. We now entirely lack all that support in Parliament and with

* Martin, *Life of the Prince Consort*, ii. 205, iii. 304, etc. 367, etc. Cf. Pauli, *Geschichte Englands*, iii, 434, and M'Carthy, *History of Our Own Times*, chapter xx.

public opinion, which he afforded to the throne. Parties will rush into extremes again. . . . Our Exhibition is to be turned out of London! The Protectionists, who are afraid of it; the Radicals, who want to prove their power over the crown-properties (the parks); the *Times*, whose Solicitor has bought a house near Hyde-Park; all storm and rail. The matter is to be settled to-night. But Peel, who had undertaken the defence, is no more, so we shall probably be beaten, and shall give up the whole Exhibition.

You see that we are not exactly lying on a bed of roses.
. . . . But God will aid your faithful brother A.'

Fortunately the apprehensions of the Prince proved to have been exaggerated. The affairs of the Exhibition took a decidedly favourable course, although the enterprise was still regarded on many sides with unfriendly eyes. After spending the first days of the spring of the year 1851 in Osborne, in order to recruit himself, Prince Albert returned to London on March 25, and the opening work in the Crystal Palace commenced forthwith. As just then the unedifying so-called Ecclesiastical Titles' Bill had come to an end in Parliament, Albert expressed himself characteristically enough on the state of things, when he wrote on March 26:

'We returned here yesterday from Osborne, where we have almost been washed away by the rain. To-day the unpacking begins in the Exhibition, and it is to be hoped that at the same time the debate on the Papal question will have come to an end, and that the priestly rabble will have been well trumped.'

In the same letter my brother wrote that he had reserved May for my visit to London: 'If you are not afraid of the crowding which will then take place.' Notwithstanding, I resolved to start at once with the Duchess on this modern pilgrimage, in the first month of the Great Exhibition. We crossed the sea in a Government vessel to Dover, whence a special train, kindly placed at our disposal by the Queen, conveyed us to London at noon on the 17th May. We stayed there until the 13th of June.

Little as it may be my business here to minutely describe those stirring days, it would be none the less impossible for the impressions of this first London International Exhibition to drop out of my memory. I have visited and seen all the really international exhibitions, and a great many of the smaller exhibitions, but nothing of all the numerous enterprises which have since sprung up, whether for single countries, or for the entire world, can be even approximately compared with the significance of the first London Exhibition.

All and everything that was to be seen here was new, and this complete originality of the thing struck the spectator most deeply. It was at the same time the last great occasion on which the English aristocracy made an effort to appear once more in its full glory before all Europe.

The Nobility undertook the representation of England in a manner such as it has never done again on any other occasion. Every imaginable splendour and luxury was displayed, as if this, too, had belonged to the 'Exposition.' Later exhibitions had a more popular and a more industrial character. The first London exhibition was pre-eminently aristocratic. On the opening day nearly 4000 state equipages appeared, and the Royal party drove up almost daily in full splendour to visit the Exhibition rooms. The Queen and her Consort stood in the zenith of their glory.

The busier people had been prophesying the most terrible dangers from the conflux of such large masses of people, and the more they had threatened and menaced with revolutions and plots, the more imposing was the reverence paid on every occasion to the Royal couple by the millions who arrived in London during the next six months for the purpose of visiting the Exhibition. The Court was hospitable to excess, and showed itself grand and brilliant in every respect. Prince Albert did not content himself with conducting the Exhibition merely as its supreme head, but he was in the full sense of the word the soul of everything.

Even his most bitter enemies acknowledged the greatness of his achievements with rare frankness at the time, and it may not be out of place in these commemorative pages,

dedicated to him as they are with all my heart, to insert here the following words of a German admirer of my brother: 'Like the Memorial erected to him by his Royal widow, which towers aloft in the neighbourhood where he once enjoyed his purest triumphs in life, so will the memory of Prince Albert, who passed so much too early from this life, ever remain connected with the success and the results of that enterprise, the financial proceeds of which practically enabled further institutions of general utility to be founded. A disciple of Peel, and related to him in mind, both as regards practical sense and noble tastes, he was able to breathe something of his own spirit into this work, the effect of which, indeed, has been felt from New Zealand to California.*'

Meanwhile the great world-festival had not failed to react also in a political respect. The numerous princely personages who appeared in London took away impressions that contrasted diametrically with the absolutistic doings, which had of late become the order of the day on the Continent. It was of no little importance, too, in a personal respect, that many of the German Sovereigns had convinced themselves that the liberal tendencies, which my brother so energetically maintained, and which he expressed with so much unreserve to everybody, were after all capable of attaining very practical ends. I will not omit to mention particularly how enthusiastically the Prince of Prussia, who was present at the opening of the Exhibition, spoke to me about my brother's success, and how he described to me the favourable impression which this civilising movement had produced upon him. It accorded, he said, so well with his feelings to see the highest spheres of society evincing so much care for the welfare of the working classes.

But also in the relations of the nations among each other a very remarkable change had taken place, since, and through,

* I take this opportunity of gratefully acknowledging the fact that my brother should have found so warm a defender in a German scholar, now, I regret to say, recently deceased, whose works have contributed much towards silencing the malevolent opinions that were from time to time still prevalent against my brother in Germany. In this respect both Pauli's essays and his excellent History of England have had greater effect than the 'Life of the Prince Consort,' which has been made too little accessible to the German public.

the International Exhibition. If, during the reign of Louis Philippe, all attempts at mutual advances between England and France had been seen to fail, one of the reasons for this failure was thought to consist necessarily in the inextinguishable national jealousy existing between these two nations.

It was this prejudice which most unmistakably collapsed in the summer of the year 1851. At that period the intimate union between the two great nations took place, which resulted in the most important political consequences of the century. Transcending by far the ephemeral interest of the festivities which Englishmen and Frenchmen mutually afforded one another in London and in Paris, there was formed between the Western Powers a certain harmony of views and convictions, with which they armed themselves against the rest of the world.

Still this *entente cordiale*, which proceeded from the consciousness of the nations themselves, was very far from bridging over the antipathy which at that time still prevailed between the two Governments, and some time was to elapse before the aversion felt in England against the President of the Republic and his Imperial aspirations became softened.

Thus the 2nd of December approached, on the history of which, obscure as it in part still remains, it is neither within the range of my task, nor does it accord with my intentions, to throw any light. I was personally, moreover, only in a position accurately to observe the effects of the event, but not its origin and history, although I learned various particulars later on from persons who possessed an intimate knowledge of the circumstances. The personally invidious reports especially, which were spread concerning Napoleon's lack of courage, and which afterwards became part of French literature in the '*Histoire d'un Crime*,' appeared to me to be devoid of all foundation.

The manner, however, in which the *Coup d'Etat* was viewed and judged in the most important circles of Europe, belonged to the most noteworthy experiences that could be made at that epoch. In England both the Queen and my brother regarded the matter in the full sense of the word from a

moral point of view. Both were indignant at the breach of faith and the character of conspiracy which marked the preparations for this act of violence. The Governments in Austria and Prussia, on the other hand, instantly viewed the *Coup d'Etat* from the high horse of politics, and proclaimed the *parole* of the 'Deliverance of European Society,' issued from Paris, with a zeal, which made it probable that the truth of this defence had really been believed. Consciences were appeased, and the fact rejoiced in, that in France also the revolution had at last been smothered.

But if Lord Palmerston was among those who approved of the *Coup d'Etat*, he no doubt had quite other motives than the politicians in Germany and Austria, who were not exactly to be commended for their great foresight in extolling the successful deliverance of the State. It is well-known that, in consequence of these conflicting tendencies, there took place in England one of the most remarkable ministerial crises that are recorded in modern Constitutional History, and Lord Palmerston paid for his too ready approval of the *Coup d'Etat* with his portfolio.

Prince Albert had certainly not improved his position with the self-willed Minister of Foreign Affairs by the very strong influence which he had thought it his duty to exercise on this occasion. But it was a matter of conscience with him to preserve the dignity of the Crown against an individual member of the Privy Council. Hence the famous dismissal of Lord Palmerston came about, which in English constitutional history has become an important example of the fact that even in England Ministers are by no means only overthrown by parliamentary majorities and minorities.

That my brother experienced, under these circumstances, a feeling of unmixed satisfaction at the retirement of Lord Palmerston, I can prove in the fullest measure from his correspondence. But nothing was more mistaken than the opinion, which prevailed here and there on the Continent, that the Prince, in his opposition to the protector of continental revolutions, had at last yielded to a consideration for the reactionary Governments. There could be no greater error

than such a supposition, for if my brother's relation to Lord Palmerston were to be generally indicated, it might rather be said that the sole point on which they were united was a certain dislike which they had in common to many persons and circumstances.

'I cannot complain of the past,' Albert wrote at the close of the year. 'The Great Exhibition, the immense difficulties of which had often caused me great anxiety, has gone off in an incredibly fortunate and honourable way, without our having the slightest *contretemps* to look back upon. And now the year closes with the happy circumstance for us, that the man who embittered our whole life, by continually placing us before the shameful alternative of either sanctioning his misdeeds throughout all Europe, and rearing up the Radical party here to a power under his leadership, or bringing about an open conflict with the Crown, and thus plunging the only country where liberty, order, and lawfulness exist together into the general chaos—that this man has, as it were, cut his own throat. Give a rogue rope enough and he will hang himself, is an old English adage with which we have sometimes tried to console ourselves, and which has proved true again here. . . . We shall have all sorts of trouble with Palmerston, who is furious; and with a Reform Bill besides, which has been promised, and on the practical carrying through of which a great deal depends for the whole of Europe.'

In the latter respect the Prince was not mistaken. Palmerston managed to apply the lever to the Reform Bill in such a way as to overthrow every one of his old colleagues, and the new Ministry of Lord Derby afforded but little prospect of a long existence.

'Lord Derby,' even my brother said, on March 10, 1852, 'is an excellent man, but he himself calls his Ministry "the Derbyshire Militia, fresh from the plough, ready to be disbanded immediately." Not one of them has ever filled a public office before; "people one never saw or heard of before," says the old Duke. Hence the phase must be regarded as a transition phase, and we are principally labouring to make it lead to something sound and solid. However, to this

end it will be necessary to reduce the political parties once more to two, and to settle, once for all, the question of Protection and Free Trade. For this purpose Parliament will probably have to be dissolved towards the month of June.

‘Meanwhile our defensive measures are to be continued, and a Militia of 120,000 men, which existed from 1688—1832, will be introduced. Also a reserve force of marines, and an increase of our artillery and coast defences. The navy is in the very best condition.’

It was very remarkable that the nation was at that time seized with a regular rage for securing itself, by all sorts of the most extraordinary fortifications, against attacks of some neighbour or other, which were as improbable as they would have been useless from a military point of view. The English public, and in part also the Royal Court, were then dreaming of an impending war with France, and of an unforeseen landing of the French army in England. Hence the carrying out of the precautionary measures of the English Government mentioned by my brother, which, from a strictly military standpoint, were of very trifling importance.

It gave one the impression as if Palmerston’s policy in years gone-by had so heavily burdened the conscience of the English, that they now saw the spectre of foreign invasions starting up on all sides.

Whilst in Paris the undecided, wavering, and in reality very anxious, Imperial Candidate was casting longing looks at England, in the hopes that he would after all succeed in obtaining some token of love from the Royal House, the world thought it necessary to fear his rolling eye, and to arm itself against his hidden designs.

It was no doubt Stockmar, whose more historical conception of Bonapartism had the effect of causing the deep distrust with which people thought it desirable to watch every step taken by the Lord of France, as my brother expressed himself. But King Leopold, too, had his share in increasing this general fear, and in furthering in every way the tendencies of the coalition of 1815.

I had visited Brussels on my journey to London in 1851,

and had thoroughly discussed the political situation with my uncle. He was not able positively to deny that the condition of Germany had become intolerable and untenable through Austria's conduct and Prussia's pliancy, but he declared that, in face of the general state of affairs, he knew of no means to escape from this dilemma. Persuaded that Napoleon speculated on nothing else but the disunion of the Powers, in order to take the left bank of the Rhine, the King had just then entered into an intimate correspondence with Prince Metternich, for the purpose of gaining influence on the Eastern Powers through this statesman, who had now once more come forward as the most distinguished, and, without doubt, the most experienced, counsellor in Vienna. In this sense he repeatedly wrote to the aged Chancellor, not merely to warn him, but also to prove to him the necessity of definitely removing the inner difficulties existing between Prussia, Russia, and Austria. It will be of great historical interest to insert here a few passages from the letters of King Leopold to Prince Metternich.

· LAEKEN, *February 7, 1852.*

‘At last an opportunity offers to recall myself to the memory of Your Serene Highness, which I have long been wishing to do. Of your health, this indispensable blessing, I hear to my hearty satisfaction the best reports.’

‘Many and unexpected things have now happened again in the country, which for sixty years has been keeping poor Europe in a state of continual anxiety and suspense. There is much in the step which could only be regarded with satisfaction, as it might lead to a strengthening of authority, of which there is indeed great need. But now the fear arises that the programme of the Emperor *Napoleon* is henceforward to be the aim of all endeavours. Against this danger there is but one remedy: the three Great Powers of the Continent must remain firmly and faithfully united in their common defence. An intelligent study of the history of 1792 till August 1813 shows what was the ruin of the Powers, and what then saved them. By no means let us under-estimate

France. Only the three Powers *united* can make their weight felt, and maintain the condition which has after all been the means of preserving peace for thirty-five years. If it is seen that the breaking of engagements will be resented with united forces, it will not be attempted. But if there should be any hope of severing the ties existing between the Powers, then there is no doubt that an attack will be made.

‘Would that this truth might take thorough hold of the conviction of the Powers, and they may be almost certain that the result will be a grand one. Our position here is extremely difficult; still I hope we shall succeed in so modifying it, that it will become no cause for embarrassment. The press has already considerably modified its tone, and as to what the need of the moment is and may be, that will have to be taken into consideration.

‘My health has suffered so much these last two years, that I sometimes doubt whether it will not leave me in the lurch altogether. Will Your Highness have the kindness to remember me to the Princess, and to accept the expression of my very sincere friendship.’

‘LAEKEN, *March 15, 1852.*

‘A good opportunity is afforded me to thank Your Highness for your very friendly and interesting letter of February 27, and I seize it with genuine pleasure. The danger which was imminent at the end of last year, was undoubtedly the struggle that was to be apprehended on the part of the anarchists against all regular forms of government. The *Coup d'Etat*, as the saying is, completely nonplussed people by its unexpectedness. Managed with moderation it was, and it still is, capable of giving Louis Napoleon an excellent position, similar to that of Napoleon in 1804. We now seem to be moving more and more in a fatalistic direction; the career of the uncle with a few embellishments, *dernière édition considérablement améliorée*. That is our future! Something was still to have been added by way of a surprise, this seems pretty certain, and concerned *us here*. But it appeared on maturer consideration after all rather risky.

‘I have now been known to Your Highness for many years. I have never let myself be surprised in any extravagance, in any worship of false gods, or confused opinions, mad as the confusion has after all been. I therefore hope to keep an unbiassed opinion also at the present crisis. My belief is that, in face of too many difficulties, a good deal will be postponed, but that at any rate the uncle is to be continued with a vengeance. Whether this will succeed, is a different question. What caused the ruin of the uncle, was the notion, which after all was not quite correct, that it would be impossible for him to rule the French without occupying them with Foreign Affairs and wars. In the case of the nephew this idea will perhaps prevail on better grounds, for it is manifest that the *difficulties* he has to contend with at home are incomparably *greater*.

‘For his leadership of France he deserves the good wishes of the great monarchic States. Against her inclination to encroach and break out of bounds, France must be impressed with the fact that Europe is, and will remain, united. The moral impression produced upon the French by this fact will be immense, and that it is a fact is a perfect blessing for France herself and for Europe. The idea will have less influence on the nephew, because he builds great hopes upon the separation of the Powers. The chief thing that remains, therefore, both against anarchy and personal ambition, is alliance in international politics, above all the alliance of the three great Continental Powers.

‘England is not likely to be the first to come forward with declarations, excepting as regards us here, but should ambition show itself, she will soon be seen in the lists. Austria, my ever dear Austria, has of late gained an immense deal of ground. I only wish that by simple means, which you spoke to me about here only last year, her finances might be brought into a normal condition. To raise the paper-money to its true value, and by this means again bring about a healthy circulation of wealth, will not be so difficult. The way to do it is indicated by the measure which banks adopt to procure money-value for their notes. . . . But my letter is drawing

out to an endless length. I will therefore only add that circumstances now allow of the Polish officers being removed, the rather for its having been proved that all of them have secret engagements, which would make them unreliable in a contest where their interests were concerned.

‘May your voice, my dear and beloved Prince, still be heard in the glorious old monarchy, helpfully as ever, and for a long time to come. May your health too bear up bravely, and may I always keep a place in your friendly sentiments, which I reciprocate with such genuine sincerity.’

‘LAEKEN, *November 17, 1852.*

‘Your Highness has had no news from me for a long time, but I have not been very well, and have been overwhelmed, besides, with business, which is increased and aggravated beyond human capacity by the political organisation under which we exist. But the sincere desire seizes me to have a frank and confidential talk with you. Would that I could do so verbally.

‘In a few days hence we shall have Napoleon III! And he has a programme, with which he is occupied day and night, and this is to bring France back again into exactly the same position, to which Napoleon I had brought her in the epoch of her culmination! May the Powers do what they will; may only one thing not occur again: that they should let themselves be induced to separate. Their holding together has preserved peace for us since 1815. Their separation would be the ruin of Europe, and of the Powers themselves. The most remarkable part of the matter is, that every national whim that might be worked upon is at the present moment being sharply scrutinised in France. It is advisable, therefore, to take every possible heed, and the traces will soon be found, and will be found, indeed, everywhere. Even propagandist measures will not be disdained. Morny, who sometimes expresses himself very plainly, mentioned it only a short time ago. So long as the Powers do *not* let themselves be separated, they will be difficult to conquer, and their union, moreover, will have an extremely imposing effect upon France.

But Your Highness must recall past memories, and consider how every peace, every truce, has always been employed to take still more than it had been possible to obtain in open war: the pretty mixture *de fraude et de violence*. Everything can still be preserved through unity among the Powers. It will be Your Highness' most precious laurel, to have strengthened and preserved this unity in every possible way.

'Here we are continuing quietly, though rather troublesomely for me, on our own, after all very sensible, way. We shall make every effort to give our neighbour no pretext, but we shall at the same time do everything in our power to defend ourselves. By the spring Antwerp will be one of the grandest defensive positions that can be imagined, and of the greatest importance to Europe. I must now close for to-day, begging you to remember me kindly to the Princess, and ever to believe in the true friendship and sincere admiration, with which I remain Your Highness's, etc.'

As may be seen from the foregoing letters, King Leopold had been watching, not without apprehension, the encouraging attitude of Austria and Prussia towards Louis Napoleon, and he hoped, through Prince Metternich, to awaken all the reminiscences of the times of the Holy Alliance. The only evil was, that it was simply impossible to bridge over certain conflicting interests which existed between the Powers who represented the Coalition of 1815. On the one hand the circumstances in Italy, and on the other hand the eastern plans of Russia, had become serious obstacles to a really unanimous course of action on the part of the Great Powers. A change in the grouping of the allied Powers might be expected at any time, and Napoleon had but to wait patiently, until some fine day the longed for friendship of England would fall to his share like a ripe fruit from the tree.

As to Italy, nearly all parties in England were agreed to oppose absolutism there by every possible means. My brother's feelings had been so much stirred by the descriptions of the state of affairs in Italy, that no tolerance could ever be expected from him again towards the absolute powers there.

When Gladstone's famous pamphlet on the prisons of Naples appeared, which, as had to be confessed later on, was written with very doubtful accuracy, Albert wrote to me: 'If you want to picture to yourself how far the reactionaries carry things, you must read Mr Gladstone's report on the state of affairs in Naples. I am sending you his letter to Lord Aberdeen by the next post. It makes one's hair stand on end to read it.'

My brother's indignation was soon directed in the same measure against Austria. Public opinion in England had been especially enraged by the flogging system that had been employed in Milan against men and women. At length the decrees of confiscation threatened to create a commotion in the diplomatic circles of England, and my brother was by no means inclined to exert a soothing influence in the matter. Very interesting is what he wrote to me on the subject in March, 1853:

'To give you a conception of the maxims of justice and policy, which Austria has lately been developing, I enclose an extract of a report from Turin, which treats of the decrees of confiscation in Italy.* People here will be very indignant, and

* The enclosed English report says:—

The information, which the Sardinian Government has received from Vienna, appears to consist, as I am informed, of a report of the remonstrances addressed verbally by M. de Revel, the Sardinian Minister at Vienna, to Count Buol:—of the replies of that Minister, and of a note which the Cabinet of Vienna has addressed to Count Appony, the Austrian Minister at Turin.

M. de Revel appears to have dwelt principally upon the great wrong done to Piedmont by the illegal and violent proceedings of the Austrian authorities in Lombardy, as affecting Sardinian subjects.

To this Count Buol replied that Austria was dying of legality, or, to use his own words, '*la légalité ! la légalité nous tue !*' M. de Revel then urged that the acts of Austria were in direct violation of the 4th Article of the treaty of 1851 between Austria and Sardinia.

Count Buol answered, that Austria would not be bound by that international compact. He said, 'that treaty is poison to us, and knowing it to be poison is good reason for not drinking it.'

M. de Revel then urged that the decree included all classes of emigrants within its sweep, which was clearly unjust, as there are instances of persons, who emigrated from Austria thirty years ago, who are affected by it; of orphan children, who cannot have plotted; of widows, who are powerless against Austria; and of other helpless inoffensive persons. He held that a distinction ought to be made in these several classes, if only for form's sake.

Count Buol declared that no distinction was possible, or should be made, that those of the emigrants who are not 'assassins' would be willing and ready to hire and pay assassins, that he considered them all, in short, as assassins, and Austria would deal with them as such.

M. de Revel told him, that a note should be addressed without delay to Count Appony for presentation to the Sardinian Government. This note has arrived in Turin. It is dated the 9th inst. It cuts off every hope of a reasonable adjustment

would scarcely take Austria's part against Germany and Prussia again so vehemently as they did before. The majority among the higher grades of the English public was to all intents and purposes thoroughly Austrian. This has been so little appreciated in Vienna, that the Camarilla has succeeded in incensing the whole of England against Austria, and there is no longer anyone to defend her! That is bad, for times may come when England's friendship might be of the greatest importance, and Italy, thus tormented, oppressed, and trampled in the dust, will never be appeased. The last rising was Mazzinist, and looked upon as an abomination by the upper classes. Now the repressive measures are directed against the upper classes themselves. How clumsy! An English proverb says even of so small a creature as a rat: "Never pen a rat up in a corner, for it must then fly to your face."

Meanwhile the assumption of the Imperial title had actually taken place on the part of Louis Napoleon, and, reading the biography of Prince Albert by Martin, it might almost be supposed that the hostile feeling of the English Court against him had then already been overcome. Napoleon having given conclusive promises concerning the preservation of peace and the respecting of France's frontier, the Queen, in contrast to the Emperor Nicholas, declared herself ready to concede to the new Emperor the honours which

of the question at issue between Austria and Sardinia. I have reason to believe that there is no argument advanced, no reason given, for the attack by Austria upon the right of Piedmont.

This note declares, broadly and distinctly, that, if Piedmont does not perform the office of a police agent for Austria, she shall be crushed. The supreme will of the Emperor, and the safety of the Austrian Empire, is the sole ground put forward for the conduct of the one State towards the other.

There is a broad hint that a change of Government in Piedmont—a radical alteration of the Constitution—the destruction of the liberties of the Piedmontese Press, may soften the blow which Austria declares she is ready to deal at Piedmont; but even with these conditions it is clear that the part subsequently assigned to Piedmont is that of police agent to Austria.

Lord Westmoreland to Lord Clarendon. Vienna, March 13, 1853.

'With respect to the sequestrations in Lombardy, Buol states the ground upon which it has been done to be the positive knowledge that the money arising from the various properties, which have been sequestered, is employed in supporting the conspiracies carried on against the Austrian Government; that is, employed to pay a most hostile Press, and to carry on the schemes of the revolutionary agitators, and as he holds, that persons having property in a State, although they are naturalised in another, yet are bound to act as loyal subjects to that State, consequently that their property can justly be made responsible for the acts, which they may be proved to have committed contrary to the loyalty which was due from them.'

he expected. But inwardly the opposition still smouldered on :

‘L’empire will now be launched in Paris, and Europe may prepare for a fright! We are polishing our rusty cannons, and building fortifications. We have established a Militia of eighty thousand men, are improving our arms, and are very active. As to the latter, it would be very desirable if I could get a Prussian needle-gun, like those now carried by the army.’

If, on the part of the great families, Louis Napoleon was in truth still far from being regarded as an equal among the sovereigns of Europe, he had created this awkward position for himself, in part through his despoliation of the Orleans family, which hardly anybody had forgiven him. I myself became involved in this affair, as both the Duke of Nemours and Duke Augustus requested me to raise a protest in my capacity as head of the house, which was concerned in many respects in the confiscations of the fortunes of the Orleans. My brother much approved of this, and desired me to accede to the request of the Orleans :

‘I just hear,’ he wrote to me, ‘that you have been asked by Nemours to protest, as head of the house, for Augustus and Victoire and their children, against their shameful despoliation through Louis Napoleon. I write to you at once to express my hope that you will do so without delay, and with all the energy at your command. But I would advise that the protest be drawn up on purely legal grounds, and everything political be kept out of it. I presume that you are provided with all the necessary documents, and that you possess copies of the marriage contracts.’

These circumstances had perhaps done most towards damaging Louis Napoleon’s credit with the legitimate Courts, and, at my first meeting with him as Emperor, I could not conceal from him that the confiscation of the private fortune of the Orleans had been one of the greatest mistakes of his Government. This act of violence was doubly unreasonable at a moment when the Emperor was cherishing the idea of seeking closer relations with the old families by means of his marriage.

He had cast his eyes first, apparently because an approach in that quarter would not be so difficult, upon a granddaughter of the Grand Duchess Stephanie of Baden, but, just as he believed the matter was successfully set on foot, he was surprised by the news of the very happy engagement of that much admired Princess. Afterwards he sought to gain his purpose with a mediatised princely house, to which I myself am closely related. But the father of the amiable Princess was not to be shaken in his opinion that German considerations of rank made it impossible for his daughter to marry a Napoleon. Thereupon Napoleon declared that he would never make another attempt to enter into an alliance with the old families, for they were incorrigible in their prejudices. The object of his first choice now adorns a German Royal throne. The other, blessed by a happier fate than the French Emperor had in store for her, has become the mother of a rich Imperial race.

For the initiated it had, under these circumstances, a flavour of quite especial piquancy, when Napoleon, some weeks later, announced his selection of Donna Eugenia Montijo to the French in the words: 'Dynastic alliances only produce a delusive security, and place family interest in the stead of national interest. For seventy years all foreign Princesses married in France have been unhappy. There is only one whom the people remember with pleasure, and she did not spring from Royal blood.'

If, moreover, the Emperor of the French called himself, with evident intention, a parvenu, which he declared to be a glorious title, it was astonishing enough that he thereby not only gained the favour of the great mob, but even reaped the highest praise from people like Lord Palmerston. These arguments ought only not to have been the consequence of discomfitures such as followed his courtships in the sovereign families! For as to the sympathy which Palmerston expressed with the French Emperor's marriage plans, showing, as they did, his disdain of princely alliances, the ever-active tongue of scandal pretended to know of a particular explanation. Indeed, the question was propounded, whether the

noble lord might not be experiencing a pleasure, something akin to that of a father-in-law, at the Emperor's marriage with Donna Eugenia. However in spite of the phrases with which Napoleon's proclamation abounded, it could not be asserted that his marriage was a very popular one, even with people in France. The aristocratic world said, the family Montijo does not belong to our circles, and the other part of the Parisian world was of opinion that the Emperor might have made just as good a choice among the ladies of France. The consequence was, that the most unfounded rumours were circulated concerning the antecedents of the young lady. They were ultimately, indeed, only overcome by the personal charm and the incomparable beauty of the Empress herself, who, in spite of all her fanciful views of life, produced upon everyone who really knew her the noblest impression of innocence and female virtue.

At any rate, the newly established Empire had taken such deep root in France that the marriage of Napoleon could be made an excuse for carrying out great demonstrations, which proclaimed aloud to all the world the Imperialistic basis and tendencies of the French national will.

It was a peculiar coincidence that just at the same time the marriage of the Heir-Apparent in the neighbouring kingdom of Belgium with an Austrian Princess was being contemplated, and that by this means two families were united, between which history had no marriage to record since the founding of the Ernestine House of Saxony.

It gave my uncle the more satisfaction to have brought about this, in a certain measure, memorable connection of his house with the Austrian family, as he had himself long been regarded at the Eastern Courts as the representative of a revolutionary tendency. On the 22nd of August the marriage of Leopold II with the Archduchess Maria, daughter of the deceased Palatine Joseph, took place. On the occasion of this journey I had for the last time the pleasure of seeing my excellent uncle in Gotha.

The year 1853 produced all sorts of changes in the personal relations of the European sovereign houses. The end of the

year was to bring about a sad event in our own widely connected family, in the death, on the 15th November, of Queen Donna Maria. According to the laws of the Portugese State my cousin was obliged to carry on the Government himself, until his eldest son came of age, and he had many difficulties to contend with. Everywhere, both in German affairs, and in the general affairs of Europe, new, uncertain, and entirely unstable, situations had to be reckoned with. In the midst of these increasing political changes I was obliged to proceed to England on business of a chiefly political character. I had many important matters to discuss and negotiate with my brother, which it was hardly possible to bring to a satisfactory conclusion by letter. On the one hand our domestic affairs, relating to the questions of the Constitution and the property of the Thuringian Duchies, had to be settled; on the other hand the general political circumstances made an understanding between us necessary.

I travelled from Berlin, in company with my wife, first *via* Cologne to Brussels, where we received at Laeken, on June 12, the news of the above-mentioned betrothal of the Duke of Brabant to the Archduchess Maria. Late at night on the 13th of June, after a stormy passage from Calais to Dover, we reached London, where Herr von Seebach, our Minister, had already arrived.

The negotiations we had to carry on with Prince Albert, in relation to the domains of the Duchies of Coburg and Gotha, were not likely to lead to any result by writing, because my brother in principle absolutely adhered to the agnatic protest* which he had raised against the law concerning the State domains of March 25, 1849. The Diet of Gotha, on the other hand, in revising the Constitution, which was accomplished by the new law concerning the State domains of May 3, 1852, persisted in its entirely opposite view in the question of the domains. Everything, therefore, depended upon our giving the Prince fuller particulars of the situation, and I had reason to hope that Herr von Seebach, who, during the short tenure of his office, had not only won the greatest respect in the

* See vol. i., p. 246.

country, but who also possessed my fullest confidence, would best overcome these difficulties by his personally convincing manner.

The recollections of this little English episode have been so gracefully recorded by Herr von Seebach, in an historical pamphlet, which was written at my desire, that I cannot do better than employ his words in reporting on this more practical side of our stay in London.

‘After the course which the discussions with the Chamber of Deputies in Gotha had taken,’ Herr von Seebach reports, ‘I was firmly persuaded that any fresh attempt to bring about an agreement with the representatives of the country, on the basis of the proposal made by the Prince, would fail by reason of their opposition. But on the other hand I could entertain no doubt, in face of one or two casual remarks of the Prince and his attorney, that the Prince was by no means disposed to abandon the view hitherto maintained by him.

‘At the desire of the Duke, who entertained the same apprehension, I therefore, before opening the discussion, requested Baron Stockmar, who was also present in London, to let me make a detailed report to him on the whole matter, and to give me the advantage of his support, provided my report convinced him that the view I represented deserved preference, as matters lay, to that of the Prince.

‘Baron Stockmar acquiesced, and after listening with great attention to my long report, in which I fully expounded the reasons for the ministerial proposal, and those in disfavour of the Prince’s, and after putting one or two questions, said, “You are right, the Prince is wrong, and will be sure to give way.”

‘The discussion had been appointed several times, but had always been postponed, and it only took place a short time before the departure of the Duke, in Baron Stockmar’s study in Buckingham Palace, in the presence of the Duke, Prince Albert, and Court Councillor Briegleb. It was opened by me with a report explaining in detail the whole history of the matter, and illustrating the reasons and counter reasons respecting the two proposals in question.

‘The discussion, which then ensued, was interrupted by a message from Her Majesty the Queen, who wished to speak with the Prince.

‘Until then, Baron Stockmar, sitting in his arm-chair, with his eyes half-closed, had maintained complete silence, and I was already afraid that I had reckoned in vain upon his support.

‘But when Prince Albert, who had risen to comply with the Queen’s wish, answered to the Duke’s suggestion that he should stay at least long enough to allow of the matter being settled: “I cannot possibly decide at once. I must first consider the matter carefully,” Baron Stockmar also rose, and, going up to the Prince, said: “Prince you *have* already considered the matter. I know you too well, not to be aware that you had made up your mind to abandon your position directly after the Minister had finished his report. You had better say yes soon, for you will do so to-morrow after all.”

‘The Prince smiled, gave the Baron his hand, and left the room with the words: “To-morrow, then.”

‘The next day, then, he really declared his consent to the ministerial proposal, and afterwards explained his motives for doing so in a detailed memorandum, which was to be placed on the records of the Ministry, and which is still preserved here.

‘Thus the basis was gained, which the Government considered suitable for further negotiations with the representatives of the country, and upon which the legal agreement regarding the domains in Coburg and Gotha was afterwards actually concluded.’

If, therefore, our journey to London could be called successful as regards the inner affairs of my Duchies, it was also interesting in every other respect, and has remained ever memorable to me, by reason of the many noteworthy meetings and events which followed in its train.

It chanced that, during those fine and stirring spring days at the Court of the Queen, also the Duke of Genoa, the new King and Queen of Hanover, and finally the Prince and Princess of Prussia appeared, partly together, and partly in succession, as guests at the Royal Court.

In the brother of King Victor Immanuel, whom I saw here for the first time, I became acquainted with one of the cleverest and most amiable men of our time. Sunny Italy appeared to have sent him to England in the prime of his age, so that, by his mere presence alone, he might make propaganda for the cause of his country. And, indeed, nothing could be compared with the attentions that poured in upon him from all sides. Prince Albert's enthusiasm for Italy had at that time, properly speaking, reached its highest pitch. Through artists who dabbled in politics, like Marochetti in particular, his artistic tendencies received, as it were, unnoticed and imperceptibly, a highly political character.

It was characteristic of the outspoken sympathies for Italy that the Queen presented the Duke of Genoa with a handsome riding horse. When the Duke thanked her with considerable emotion for this great attention, this Queen spoke the following memorable words, which said perhaps more than a whole book full of diplomatic Notes on the Italian question; 'I hope you will ride this horse, when the battles are fought for the liberation of Italy.'

At the present day, when the accomplished facts are recognised by everybody, it is hardly possible to conceive the effect which the amiable encouragement of the Queen of England was calculated to produce on the course of events which were then developing.

However, the King of Hanover took care that the conversations did not enter into any too aggressive paths. With the persistency of a man who, on account of his infirmity, appeared in the habit of expecting every possible consideration, he lectured from morning till evening on the aims and purposes of his Christianly Germanic reign. That Prince Albert at times gave free scope to his satire against everything that lost itself in romantic chimeras, seemed to disconcert him very little. The arrival of the Prince of Prussia, which took place on June 27th, at length brought us back to the practical problems of politics.

I believe I am not asserting too much, when I declare that the pronounced tendency of the Prince, which made itself felt

in the following years, in German and general European affairs, raising such great hopes, and affording, as it did, the first basis for the sympathies extended to the future King, had some connection with this visit of his to England.

We found on this neutral ground, as it were, abundant opportunity for an interchange of political ideas. As my brother had already gained a complete insight into the situation which Russia ultimately brought about, he did not neglect to exert every means to win over the Prince of Prussia to the position which the latter, to the astonishment of many, afterwards really took up and maintained. It is certain that the origin of the political ideas, which, in the course of the next years, the Prince of Prussia considered himself bound to uphold, even in opposition to his brother, were at least connected with his stay in London in the year 1853. Our intercourse here had, in the most natural way, assumed a very confidential character, and I will not omit to mention, that it was just at this period, too, that we adopted a more intimate form of addressing each other.

Whilst the Court was still taken up with the festivities connected with the christening of the Queen's youngest son, Prince Leopold, the great Camp at Chatham had attracted the attention of the country and the foreign Powers. For a long time no similar military spectacle had been seen on the plains of England. On the 21st of June,* the Queen, accompanied by Albert, King George, and myself, visited the camp, where the troops were quartered in a vast city of tents. She hereupon held a review of all the troops, and then watched from an adjoining height a few tactical evolutions, which appeared to us to be rather childish.

Probably no one then believed that these troops were so soon to face the most serious tasks of war, nor had anybody yet an idea that in a short time the English army was to prove its sterling qualities on the distant battle-fields of the Crimea.

* Not on the 24th of June, as Martin states: '*Life of the Prince Consort*,' ii., 510. With regard to all more personal events, to which the epidemic of measles is principally to be reckoned, which then attacked all the members of the Royal Family, and which was carried by us to Brussels, I refer the reader to the accounts given in that work.

In the inner relations of the powerful Empire, however, the severe tension and irritability of the parties was already felt. My brother, at such moments, concealed, behind principles of the strictest constitutional doctrine, not unfrequently a certain reserve when appearing in public. On these occasions he avoided creating the appearance, as if he personally inclined more to one or the other party, or opinion. I still have a lively recollection of a little scene, though quite of a friendly character, which occurred between us in this respect.

I had been introduced by some acquaintances, amongst which was Mr Oliphant, into the Cosmopolitan Club, where the publisher of the *Times*, and other personages of pronounced political views, concocted, as the saying went, so-called public opinion. To me it was of the most instructive interest to attend gatherings of this kind in London. But when Prince Albert heard of these acquaintances and visits of mine, he assailed me with no slight fraternal reproaches for indulging, as his brother, in such political intercourse. That I, as a German and a Sovereign, was in a position to hold intercourse with all parties, he would by no means allow, so far as England was concerned.

The Aberdeen Ministry, which had been in office since December 27, 1852, glittered in many colours, and my brother therefore thought he ought to show a particular degree of objectivity, in order, as he expressed it, not to disturb the adjustment of parties. Yet everybody was aware that the attempt at a coalition, on which the title Ministry of all the Talents had ironically been bestowed, gave no guarantee of a long duration. Protectionists and Peelites had found a place in the Cabinet; also Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston; and there was no harmony to be found between Home and Foreign policy. Palmerston, as Home Secretary, could not indulge much in his favourite activity, and had to confine himself to bringing his influence to bear on Lord Clarendon, who conducted the Foreign Office, and who was an enemy of all intriguing policy.

A unanimous national conviction really only existed on the one point, that England ought to offer steady resistance

to the allurements of the Emperor Nicholas respecting the division of the Turkish inheritance. When, in the middle of the year 1853, the Emperor had convinced himself that he would persuade neither England nor France to take part in the robbery, nothing remained to deceive him with regard to the position of affairs but his absolute confidence in the followership of Austria and Prussia.

I will only allude in a few words to the origin of the Eastern complications. It is well-known how the simple dispute about the Holy Places soon opened up the question of the Emperor Nicholas's protectorship of the Greek Church in the East, and how, with this turn of affairs, the rest of Europe became more and more involved in the diplomatic conflict going on at the Porte.

I will not repeat what has been said so often, that the treaties afforded the Emperor Nicholas no means of proving his sovereign right over all the Greek Christians in Turkey. But, glancing retrospectively at these things, it may be said that it was a delusion on the part of the Western Powers, if they hoped to procure a tolerable position for the Christian nations in the East, by means of Turkish promises and decrees of the Sultan. It had been acknowledged by Lord Aberdeen himself, in the course of the negotiations of the year 1853, that no reliance could be placed upon the promises made from time to time by Turkey, in respect of reforms. But a solution of the Eastern Question by forcible means was far from being desired, and it was endeavoured to check the outbreak of a war between Russia and Turkey at any price.

At the beginning of the year, Austria and Russia, by means of special missions, had sought to bring pressure to bear on Turkey. Austria espoused the cause of the Montenegrines, sent Count Leiningen to Constantinople, and was gratified by a brilliant success with the Porte. Russia, on the other hand, by the mission of General Mentschikoff, undertook to draw the attention of the Slavonic and orthodox population of Turkey away from Austria, and to represent herself as the true patron of those subjects of the Sultan, who were related to her both by race and by creed.

The draft of the treaty presented to Reschid Pasha by Mentschikoff on May the 20th was declined by the Porte, and Mentschikoff took his départure without having effected his purpose. Even after diplomatic relations between Russia and Turkey had been broken off, the preservation of peace was still by no means despaired of in England, although the Court, the Cabinet, and the public, were every day talking themselves more into a state of the greatest exasperation against Russia.

Quite in contrast with this temper in England, Napoleon, remarkably enough, showed himself, in those days, reserved and extremely pacific. It was more the persuasion of the English Cabinet, and particularly the urgent appeals of Lord Palmerston, which induced the Emperor of the French to offer his assent to the co-operation of the two fleets in the Bay of Besica. But when in July the Russians occupied the Danubian Principalities, England once more endeavoured to allay the fanatic desire for war, which had seized the Turks, and, by Lord Stratford's advice, the Porte, in order to show her moderation in the strongest light, refused to regard the invasion as a declaration of war. It was rather more difficult, however, to induce the Porte to make material concessions with regard to the Russian demands, and the influence of all the Powers proved of no avail in face of the firm will of the Porte not to admit anything in the shape of a protectorate of Russia over the orthodox subjects of the Sultan.

Thus it came to Omer Pasha's letter to Gortschakoff, in which he called upon him to quit the Danubian Principalities within a fortnight, which Gortschakoff of course refused to do. On the part of the European Powers the programme now arrived at was the greatest possible limitation of the dangers of war, and they still hesitated to let the fleets enter the Black Sea, lest they should encourage the war-like ardour of the Turks.

The Emperor Nicholas had been endeavouring, since September, to obtain successively the alliance of Austria and Prussia, indeed, even that of France. After having convinced himself that he could not induce England to abandon her

traditional policy, he tried to take advantage of the jealousy and the ill-humour against 'perfidious Albion,' which undoubtedly prevailed, both in Austria, in natural contrast to the favour shown by England to the revolutionary movements, and with Louis Napoleon, in consequence of the personal slights he had sustained.

In Olmütz, where the Russian Czar had a meeting with the Emperor Francis Joseph, and in Berlin, where he soon after paid a visit to the King of Prussia, it was said to have been observed that the relations of the old allies were no longer absolutely secure. Notwithstanding, Russian policy had no lack of faithful abettors both in Prussia and in Austria. Various circles in Berlin, to which Prince Charles and his adherents were no strangers, thought they might indulge in hopes of a sort of conservative crusade against the revolutionary doings encouraged by England. A curious attempt was made to exclude several English subjects resident in Berlin from the entertainments and festivities of the Court. That part of society in the capital which was known for its Russian sympathies made great show of celebrating Russian birthday anniversaries, and matters were always so arranged that at Court levees, and at the houses of the princes, as many Russians appeared as possible.

In Austria the Emperor Nicholas had, besides, managed to attain a diplomatic success. The Cabinet there, in compliance with a Russian suggestion, came forward with the venturesome proposal that the four Courts should assure Turkey that the personal explanations of the Emperor Nicholas had fully convinced them of his disinterested intentions. However, the Western Powers no longer entered into this game. So far as Prussia was concerned, no doubt the Czar had succeeded in violently stirring up the King's feelings against Napoleon. But the Prussian Government declared that it would not swerve from its position of neutrality.

All these strong currents and counter-currents at the Courts of the old allies did not prevent Gortschakoff, as ambassador in Stuttgart, from again proposing to the Emperor Napoleon, through his ambassador Count Béarn, a separate agreement

on the whole Eastern difference. If these attempts failed, the reason lay in the circumstance that the personal wishes of Napoleon with regard to the recognition of his family were not complied with on the part of Russia.

As to the really diplomatic course of the negotiations, which proved unable to stay the ultimate clash of arms in Turkey, so many documents and intimate correspondences relating to those days have been published, that it would scarcely be possible to say anything new on the subject. There are, however, several erroneous impressions still prevailing with regard to the position which individual personages of distinction occupied towards one another at that time, and in this respect I can add, to the facts which are already known, a few further explanations from the correspondence of my brother.

‘You are right,’ he writes on October 20, 1853, to enquire anxiously after the position of European politics. It is truly a sad one, and depends chiefly upon whether the Emperor Nicholas really desires war, or not. That he wishes for forbidden things, there can be no longer any doubt, after Nesselrode’s long explanatory memorandum. But as to whether he is ready to pay for them with an European war, we are still unaware. Much will depend on what attitude the Powers take up. And the comedy which recently came to grief in Berlin, is the best thing in this respect that could have happened for the preservation of peace.

‘The Emperor desired a league, offensive and defensive, with Austria and Prussia against England and France. In other words, that Germany should once more pay the bill for his Russian hankerings in the East. Austria assented, provided that Prussia joined. . . . The Emperor summoned the King to Warsaw, went at last to Berlin himself, succeeded, too, in lashing the King into the greatest fury against France (which as it happens, keeps quite quiet and pacific in the whole matter), but failed in consequence of Manteuffel’s firmness, who declared that he would never deviate from Prussia’s policy of neutrality.*

* However, Manteuffel’s merit is here decidedly over-estimated by my brother. The idea of absolute neutrality was already originally the King’s own, and was the beginning of the vacillations which marked his behaviour towards Russia and the Western Powers during the whole of the ensuing Crimean War.

‘We are forced to an *entente cordiale* with Louis Napoleon. It is of advantage to him; they are just now very intent upon making money in Paris; the Emperor is often ailing, etc. etc.; in short the temper over there is unusually quiet, and, with regard to us here, docile and yielding. People here are indignant with Russia, yet determined to preserve peace, as long as it can be done. Our fleet (combined) has orders to repel all attacks on the Turkish coast with force, but fresh attempts at mediation are to be made, based upon the treaty of 1841, including the latest Russian declarations from Olmütz, avoiding the obstacles which Reschid Pasha discovered in the Vienna note, and referring back to the treaties of Kainardji and Adrianople.

‘It is still undecided whether the Porte is to be threatened that, if she resists a fair solution, she will be left in the lurch. I am for doing so, because otherwise the mad fanatics, reckoning on our assistance, will be capable of the silliest follies, such as the present declaration of war. But I own that it is difficult, because, whether they are right or wrong, a moment may come, and probably would come in their war, when we might be obliged to step in, not by any means for their sakes, but on account of our own interests and those of Europe. That is to say, we cannot let the Russians take Constantinople. The difficulties there are enormous, those with the *mixed* Cabinet here no less so, those in Petersburg enough to drive one crazy; and still—an honest and manly attitude on the part of Austria would make the *fair* and *peaceable* solution of the dispute a matter of immediate certainty.’

As may be seen, Prince Albert did not deceive himself as to the difficulty of the situation, and he wrote a few days later again in this sense:

‘There is still no end to be seen to the Eastern complication. There are abominable elements at work, and ineffable skill and perseverance will be necessary, especially on our part, to prevent great mischief.’

The conclusion which was gradually being drawn from these circumstances, by German politicians, was that it would

now be possible firmly to oppose the principles of the Holy Alliances. All my hopes were now fixed on the non-realisation of the wishes, expressed a short time ago by my uncle, with regard to the unity of the Eastern Powers. However, public opinion in England had been driven by a portion of the Ministry itself into an ever increasing agitation for war. The conflict going on between the calmer and the more violent views on the question, led to various misunderstandings, from which my brother and the Queen had a great deal to suffer. Particularly Lord Palmerston's withdrawal from the Cabinet gave rise to the opinion, that disunion of a deeper kind prevailed in the Government than was actually the case.

But as the motives which led to Lord Palmerston's step, were then and afterwards very differently construed, it will be only fair to hear what my brother himself says in the last days of the year 1853 on this subject, which was soon after to raise a good deal more dust.

'I do not give up the hope yet,' Albert wrote on December 19, 'that we shall still enforce peace. But the unreasonableness, both on the part of the Russians, and on that of the Turks, is incredible. One element of war quitted the Cabinet, the day before yesterday, in the person of Lord Palmerston. But merely on a question of Home Affairs. The great liberal Bramarbas, who is striving to force free institutions upon all countries, finds a reform-measure, approved of by Lord Aberdeen, too *liberal*!! What a deal of trouble that man has caused us already!! His cession from the Cabinet of course weakens the Ministry, and gives the Protectionists and Ultra-tories a leader in the Lower House, at whose head it is probably his intention, one of these days, to force himself upon us as Prime Minister.'

If Lord Palmerston, by his cession from the Cabinet, had really had the intention of overthrowing the Aberdeen Ministry, of placing himself at the head of the Government, and then rigorously carrying through the warlike policy advocated by him, he had simply deceived himself. None of the members of the Cabinet followed his example. Lord Aberdeen remained undisturbed as Prime Minister, and a week

later Palmerston was received back again by his colleagues, after having dropped his sham opposition to Russell's Reform Bill. Among the public who held fast to the belief that Palmerston had only come into conflict with the Cabinet on account of the Eastern Question, his stay was regarded as a sign that the policy of the Government was now approaching warlike action.

Under these circumstances, a disposition arose which entirely crushed all prudent and peaceable tendencies. The idea of drifting on to war at the side of Louis Napoleon, which was still so distasteful to my brother, had gradually to give way to the conviction that the war, as the Queen wrote to King Leopold at the time, was 'incredibly popular.' Curiously enough, it was still to have a prelude in the well-known, and not altogether harmless, attack of the Palmerstonian and Napoleonic organs on my brother, with which the stirring year 1854 was introduced.

CHAPTER II

THE YEAR 1854.—CHANGE IN THE DUKE'S POLITICAL ATTITUDE.—HIS JUSTIFICATION.—THE POSITION OF THE GREAT POWERS.—RUPTURE BETWEEN FRANCE AND RUSSIA.—THE TREATY OF FRANCE AND ENGLAND WITH TURKEY.—THE WAR WITH RUSSIA.—THE COBURGS SUSPECTED OF SYMPATHISING WITH THE EASTERN POWERS.—ATTACKS IN THE ENGLISH PRESS ON PRINCE ALBERT.—KING LEOPOLD OF BELGIUM AND LOUIS NAPOLEON.—THE DUKE OFFERS TO GO TO PARIS.—LETTER FROM KING LEOPOLD.—THE DUKE'S VISIT TO PARIS ARRANGED.—PRINCE ALBERT'S DISPLEASURE.—CORRESPONDENCE.—THE DUKE GOES FIRST TO BERLIN.—HIS MEMORANDUM TO KING FREDERICK WILLIAM IV.—THE RUSSIAN PARTY IN BERLIN.—KING LEOPOLD SETS FORTH THE POINTS TO BE DISCUSSED WITH THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON.—THE DUKE IN PARIS.—HIS FRIENDLY RECEPTION.—KING JEROME.—IMPRESSIONS AT THE COURT.—THE EMPEROR AND EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH.—CONVERSATIONS WITH NAPOLEON.—THE EMPEROR'S ANXIETY FOR AN ALLIANCE WITH AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA.—HIS WILLINGNESS TO MEET PRUSSIA'S WISHES.—DISCUSSIONS ON THE PLAN OF OPERATIONS.—NAPOLEON'S FUTURE PLANS.—HIS KNOWLEDGE OF BERLIN AFFAIRS.—HIS PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE KING OF PRUSSIA.—PRINCE CHIMAY.—THE ENDEAVOURS OF THE EMPRESS EUGENIE TO DRAW THE DUKE ON THE SUBJECT OF QUEEN VICTORIA AND PRINCE ALBERT.—THE DUKE'S DILEMMA.—THE CHARACTER OF LOUIS NAPOLEON.—THE DUKE'S VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT.

THE year 1854 marks one of the greatest crises in the history of European diplomacy, of European alliances, and of the modern system of States altogether. What the revolution of 1848—1850, the public opinion of half of Europe, the liberal and national tendencies of the peoples, were not able to bring about, had been set on foot by the Holy Places of the East and the Turkish goings-on in Constantinople, by the Russian occupation of Wallachian territories, and by the roar of the cannon

at Sinope. If both lawful and revolutionary risings against the supremacy of the Holy Alliance had only served to fasten the old ties all the more firmly, within and without, it was now the policy of the Emperor Nicholas himself that was to explode the antiquated alliances and friendships.

Over night, as it were, the moment had come when the liberal minded portion of the West, and in particular of Germany, could indulge in the well-justified hope that the shackles of the Russian Colossus might at last be loosened, and perhaps cast off for ever. And at any rate our subsequent development, at least, was in chief part rendered possible, or facilitated, by the weakening of Russia in the Crimean war.

If, then, the year 1854 marks an important chapter in the general conditions of Europe, a certain change had at this time also taken place in my own political mode of action and bearing, for which the reader of these following pages will expect some kind of justification. I thought it desirable at that time to adopt a different, and, if the term may pass, a more personal, course of proceeding, not as to the purposes and aims, but as to the methods and means, of my public activity.

Amidst the commotion of the reaction which, in consequence of the combined efforts of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, still exercised its influence on every petty State in Germany, I thought it incumbent on me to take my place on the public stage, occupied by the movers and prompters of events, in a far more decided and open manner than may be explainable from the nature and character of my immediate and official position. I had, by degrees, become personally involved in political matters, and a host of negotiations and relations were forced upon me, which, in the regular course of affairs, are wont to fall almost exclusively to the lot of diplomatists by profession.

The more all political life, since 1850, had become restricted to the Cabinets, the more surely a participation in it could only be gained, by treading the tortuous paths of secret negotiations and personal action. But it was in the nature of a small confederate State, that its Sovereign, unless he were willed to altogether renounce all political activity, was obliged

to act as his own foreign minister, his own ambassador, and his own agent

This, then, may answer the question, which was perhaps raised here and there at the time, as to how I came to meddle, uninvited, in the international concerns of Europe. But the answer to such objection was at bottom very simple. It was quite intelligible and welcome, at the time, to every honest German man who knew that every one is called upon, according to his position, to help and save in the general distress as much as he can. The state of things brought about by Prussia's and Austria's dependence on Russia was so galling, the general patriotic temper in Germany so envenomed, the despair with which the future of Germany was regarded so all-pervading, that an improvement of the inner situation could only be hoped for by extraordinary means and efforts. To use the favourable opportunity which the moment offered me, to this purpose, appeared to me, under the circumstances, merely a patriotic duty, and innumerable friends who shared my sentiments, urged and pressed me every day to take the fullest advantage of my position, in order that the long-desired ends might be attained.

My object, in the first instance, was to separate Prussia in connection with Austria from Russia, to overthrow in this manner the prevailing political system, and, by the round-about paths of diplomacy, to help the German Confederation, buried since 1850, on to its legs again. Nor can I even now regret having had at least a trifling share in the attainment of the negative part of the task, because it admits of no doubt that, much as Russia's friendship is to be desired, it would have been quite impossible to have brought Germany to her present exalted position, if the ascendancy of Russia had lasted. Russia could not have admitted it, in justice to herself, had she been spared the experiences of these years.

Seeing what aspect the personal and general state of affairs had assumed at the end of the year 1853, there was no longer anything to be hoped, or expected, from the exertion of a direct—it may almost be said—loyal influence on the inner concerns of the Diet, particularly in face of the composition of

the Berlin Chambers, the firm structure of the *Kreutz-Zeitung* party, and the complete ascendancy of a more and more Ultramontane system in Austria. If, on the other hand, the German Governments were urged more towards the policy of the Western Powers in the great European question, and if, by distinctly attaching themselves to England, at least in respect of Eastern affairs, they were severed from Russia, the effect on the inner affairs of Germany could not fail to be soon felt. I therefore urged on in this direction, from my place, as much as I could, and thus succeeded, at the very beginning of the year, in taking some decisive steps in Paris, which could not remain unheeded at a time when the Prussian and Austrian Courts were still at a loss to find an official point of contact with the nephew of the uncle.

But it will be necessary briefly to recall to mind the position of the diplomatic negotiations between the Great Powers, before I can relate the particulars of my first visit to the Court of the Tuileries.

After the manifesto with which the Emperor Nicholas had responded to Turkey's declaration of war on November 1, the attempts at mediation on the part of the Western Powers had to be regarded as having failed. The Emperor Nicholas declared that he had been forced to the war, and was obliged to take up arms, not only in order to force Turkey to keep her contracts, but to demand satisfaction for the insults which the Sultan had offered to the Emperor personally, in his solicitude for the welfare of the Holy Church, the same Church to which the Russian nation belongs. The Czar had thereupon issued a summons to a kind of religious war, from which the threats of the Western Powers could no longer deter him. If European diplomacy still desired to attain anything in the interests of peace, this was surely only possible by means of the co-operation of Austria and Prussia, who, in December, 1853, were perhaps still able to prevent war by some determined action. The Emperor Nicholas had himself frankly acknowledged that the four Great Powers combined had it in their hand to force him to give up his attack on Turkey. But he did not believe in the Quadruple

Alliance of the Powers, nor was he inclined to over-estimate the seriousness of their attempts at an understanding.

The pains, indeed, by dint of which the diplomatists in Vienna had, on December 5, brought about the first joint note on the Eastern Question, was not calculated to inspire the Russian Cabinet with much alarm. The fact that the Note laid stress on the integrity of European Turkey, could be regarded by the Emperor with all the more indifference, as he had never neglected, either in Berlin or Vienna, to proclaim his beneficent and entirely disinterested attentions towards Turkey. He could, therefore, reckon on the sympathies of his old allies, both after and before the 5th of December. The actions of the Powers united by the Note directed itself, in fact, rather against Turkey than against Russia, seeing that the Sultan was requested to intimate the conditions on which he would be willing to conclude peace.

On the 31st of December the answer of the Porte arrived. On the 13th of January, 1854, the Conference in Vienna declared the answer to be satisfactory, and the four Powers together then negotiated the proposed conditions of Peace in St Petersburg. But on January 31, they were declined by the Emperor Nicholas with the greatest firmness. Then followed the mission of Count Orloff to Vienna, and the steps taken by M. de Budberg in Berlin, in order to neutralise one Cabinet by the other. Although these endeavours failed, and the Emperor Nicholas became particularly incensed against Prussia, yet there had nowhere been any deviation, even by a hair's breadth, from the line of diplomatic intervention. Of any serious threat, or even of mere dissuasion, there was no question in Vienna, and still less so in Berlin. Such a thing, for the present, hardly entered men's thoughts with reference to the mighty Czar.

Even after so rigorous a refusal as that of January 31, Count Buol thought it desirable to come forward, again and again, with renewed attempts at mediation, and minds in Berlin were so elated by the joint rejection of Count Orloff's proposals, that people thought they now had a right to sit with their hands in their laps for some time to come. There was

much inward vexation on the subject of the St Petersburg brother-in-law; the French Emperor was distrusted; and impetuous England was begrudged its successes at the Golden Horn. Hence no absolute treaty engagement with Austria, in respect of Turkey, was desired, nor any firm alliance with the Western Powers.

The King declared that he would never sign a convention which might give the Western Powers an opportunity to draw Prussia into a war with Russia, and when France and England decided on issuing their *ultimatum* of February 27, 1854, he could no longer be prevailed upon to go even so far as Austria, and give the *ultimatum* his support in St Petersburg.

In France the war was certainly very unpopular. The prospect of a severe contest in the far East had produced a feeling of depression in the country, and the Emperor Napoleon was, at the beginning of the year 1854, still far from being in a war-like frame of mind. It required a fresh and especially strong act on the part of the Emperor Nicholas, to rouse French military ardour.

On the 29th of January, 1854, Napoleon had addressed an autograph letter, couched in the most pacific terms, to the Czar, which the latter answered with the most unfortunate allusion that he could possibly make, assuring the French, in fact, that they would find Russia still just as patriotic now, as they had found her in Moscow in 1812.

‘The Emperor Nicholas,’ my brother wrote on the 23rd of February, ‘has broken off the bridges, by his answer to Napoleon’s letter, and recalled the memory of 1812. We are arming. . . . How Russia can accept war under such circumstances, the gods only know. The Emperor must be mad, if he does. But whether he does, or not, the magic wand with which he ruled Europe, is broken. The poor German Kings who made it their pride to be his . . . , are truly to be pitied.’

On the 19th of February the ambassadors of France and England announced to the Porte the intention of the two Powers to muster a considerable land-force on this side of the Balkans. On the 27th the *ultimatum* already mentioned was

sent to St Petersburg, and finally, on March 12, the decisive treaty of the Western Powers with Turkey was concluded. The one most powerful half of Europe was now engaged in open war with Russia; the other half of the Powers still wavered and balanced between attempts at neutrality and mediation, between desire for war and want of peace, between fear of Russia and fear of France. The excitement in Germany was tremendous. Memories of the Rhenish Confederation and Cossack invasions preyed upon the troubled imagination of the nations in the East and the West, and the helplessness of the politically abandoned Confederation once more impressed the minds of all thinking men.

The situation was now at least thoroughly altered, and the alliances hitherto entered into seemed entirely loosened. Even the most extreme of optimists could no longer believe in a firm maintenance of the Holy Alliance of the Conservative Powers of Europe. In Berlin the watchword issued by the *Kreuzzeitung* was now merely to save what could be saved, and in Vienna the extravagant friends of Russia were disturbed in their political circles by the voice of the aged Metternich himself.

Among the Sovereigns who, though not surprised by this turn of affairs, were yet forced by it to a very different view of the political situation than they had hitherto entertained, was my uncle, King Leopold of Belgium. If all his counsels during the past years had aimed at averting the dangers threatening from Bonapartist France, by strengthening the friendship between Russia, Prussia, and Austria, he could now no longer doubt that the support once afforded by the alliances of the Eastern Powers was gone for ever. It was very painful to him that in France, and even in England, the House of Coburg had latterly become suspected of gravitating very strongly towards the opposite side of the Eastern Powers, and the unpleasantness and the attacks to which my brother was just then exposed in the Palmerstonian and Napoleonic press, made his desire of a public change of front appear only too justifiable.*

* In the 'Life of Prince Albert' this episode is described with such extraordinary

Besides, it was regarded as far from sufficient, in respect of the general position of things, that the malevolent aspersions cast on the Prince had of necessity met with a complete refutation in the English parliamentary debates in February.

For my uncle, as France's nearest neighbour, it was, of course, desirable, under all circumstances, to enter as soon as possible into friendly relations with Louis Napoleon. Whilst my brother was still of the opinion that the alliance of the English and French States might be continued, and grow more intimate, without its becoming necessary, in any way to alter the cool and distant manner adopted towards the representative of Imperialism personally, our experienced old uncle had at once acknowledged to himself that the personal attitude which had hitherto been assumed, was by no means altogether free from serious objections. He recognised the necessity of bringing about a closer intimacy with the French Emperor, and, with his usual firmness, grasped the next opportunity that offered itself for the purpose.

Louis Napoleon, who, for more than a twelvemonth, had been cherishing nothing but the longing desire to be treated on an equal footing by the old families of Europe, had at various times made strenuous efforts to obtain the assistance of my uncle towards this end. He therefore caused the young Prince Jerome to pay a visit to Brussels, hoping by this means to gain King Leopold's interest in inducing the English Royal Family to enter into personal intercourse with him.

The son of the former King of Westphalia met with the best reception at the hands of the Belgian Court and the Belgian Government, and my uncle showed himself so cordial and friendly towards the young Bonaparte, that this visit, characteristically enough, in face of the still prevailing disposition at

minuteness, that I may presume it to be sufficiently well-known. Still, I will insert here a letter written to me by the Prince on the 7th of January, 1854.

Albert certainly takes off the English papers with great humour, when he writes: 'The rage for war has risen here to a pitch, such as I should hardly have considered possible. The public has graciously selected me as its scape-goat, to answer for its not yet having come to war, and says "logically," the interest of the Coburg family, which is Russian, Belgian, Orleanistic, Fusionistic, is preferred to the alliance with Louis Napoleon. The Emperor of Russia now governs England. He telegraphs to Gotha, you to Brussels. Uncle Leopold to me, I whisper in Victoria's ear, she gets round old Aberdeen, and the voice of the only *English* Minister, Palmerston, is not listened to, ay, he is always intrigued against, at the Court, and by the Court.'

most of the Courts, was spoken of as a most remarkable event. However, with regard to the chief tendency pursued by Louis Napoleon, to enter into closer relations with the Queen of England and Prince Albert, the visit of young Jerome proved, for the time being, unsuccessful, as King Leopold by no means ventured to intercede in favour of such personal relations in London. Napoleon, on the other hand, tried to make at least as much capital as possible out of the 'event,' and generalised, to the best of his power, the relations which he had gained with the House of Coburg, as he expressed himself. He thought, by this means, to make an impression upon the adherents of the Orleans family in France, as our nearest relations, and at the same time to contradict the opinion which prevailed abroad, that he was on a bad footing with Prince Albert.

About the middle of February I received from the French Legation in Dresden information of a circular of the French Minister, in which the significance of Prince Napoleon's visit to Brussels had been represented in the most brilliant colours. The document concluded with the words: '*L'empereur, envoyant un Prince de sa famille à Bruxelles, rendre visite à un Souverain qui, par sa position et son âge, est le véritable Chef des Cobourgs, se fait un plaisir d'établir publiquement qu'il n'est pas un membre de cette illustre maison, qu'il ne croie animé à son égard des sentiments les plus loyaux.*'

I at once acquainted King Leopold with this manifestation of the French Cabinet, and added: 'I believe it to be the interest of the House not to contradict this assumption in any way, particularly at the present critical moment.

'If it should be your intention to return this visit, and if you should have any reason for not wishing any of your sons to go to Paris just yet, I shall be most happy, if you desire it, to undertake a mission in this sense. Many objects might be furthered by it.'

King Leopold answered in a letter, in which he entered, almost enthusiastically, into my proposal, and at once discoursed, in his own peculiar way, on the points of view that, according to his opinion, would have to be discussed at a meeting with the Emperor Napoleon. In a certain sense, his

resolve marked a turning point in the relations of the European Courts to each other. I cannot refrain, therefore, from inserting this memorable letter here in full.

LAEKEN, *February 19, 1854.*

‘MY DEAR ERNEST,—Your kind letter surprised me most agreeably, and I hasten to reply to it by special messenger, who can then bring me back your answer. The present moment is extremely important, and I accept *your offer to go to Paris*, with great pleasure. The more the Coburgs have been accused of being opposed to the policy of civilisation and of Western Europe, the more important it would be, as an answer to this accusation, to see you in Paris. The future of Germany, in which you rightly take so great an interest, is now at stake. By your presence in Paris, you can find out a good many things, in this respect, that escape the diplomatists, who don’t see the wood for the trees.

‘It will be agreeable to Prussia, too, if you proceed, at this important juncture, to the place which must needs exercise so great an influence on her future. Prussia’s behaviour has been good and proper throughout. The latest position is as follows: Russia says, *sa dignité* does not allow of her accepting the proposals of the four Powers, two of whom are so thoroughly well-disposed towards Russia. She desires no conquests; she does not desire the overthrow of the Porte; but, on the other hand, she does require certain engagements. This is too childish. Not diplomatic Notes, but political situations, give influence. Russia has no interest as yet in overthrowing the Porte, for she can’t make use of the inheritance. By the dissolution of Turkey, therefore, she would get confusion and Eastern ideas for neighbours. Unless the Emperor Nicholas has become somewhat crazy, he will have to seek the means, in common with Austria and Prussia, of getting himself out of the net with a good grace. Prussia can do a good deal here, by a sensible policy, in restraining Austria from committing mistakes, to which she might be misled by her individual opinions.

‘The Emperor Napoleon desires, in these matters, to play

the part forced upon him by Russia. It is that of umpire. England has armed, and seeing that Russia behaved so inexplicably, the majority of the Cabinet was obliged to go forward, whether it wanted to or not. Nor will it now let itself be deterred any longer, and by the blockade of the Baltic Russia can be immensely incommoded and disturbed. This is inevitable.

‘Meanwhile, there exists in Paris, under the pretext that Austria is not acting honestly, the desire to manœuvre in Italy. This would be an extremely dangerous thing for Germany. To look on, would be to recall the old policy of the Peace of Basle, where every one was slaughtered singly. To help, and have the war on the Rhine, would not be agreeable either. My *résumé* is like yours, to keep the two great German Powers, together with the Confederation, united. By this means alone will they escape all danger themselves, and finally be the peace-makers. Your mission to Paris will place the Coburgs just where they appear MERELY USEFUL, and will therefore be regarded favourably by all parties.’

At the end of this letter, the King expressed the wish that I should set out on my journey very soon. He reserved the last days of February for a personal conference, which was to take place between us, before I ventured on the hot pavement of Paris.

Hereupon, I requested my uncle to have the announcement of my visit to Paris made by the Belgian Embassy, promising to communicate the day of my arrival in Paris from Brussels, which I intended to reach on February 28. Moreover, I was determined, at the outset, to accomplish my journey *via* Berlin, because, as I wrote expressly to King Leopold, everything depended on my acting in conformity with *this* Government's views—if it have any firm view, which God grant it may. I left it to my uncle to acquaint my brother with our whole undertaking, the more so as I was quite uncertain as to how the news of my journey would be received at the English Court.

I was now all of a sudden placed in the midst of the great

political action. My journey had a character which it is not altogether simple to define. Though announced by the Belgian Government, I was far from being its representative, seeing that I was only to appear at the Parisian Court at the personal desire of the King, my uncle. If I succeeded, as I hoped I should, in obtaining the approval of Prussia too, I might consider myself the mediator of the individual relations of two Kings,—Leopold and Frederick William IV. But I could undertake such a mission only as a reigning Sovereign, and was unable, in any way, to avoid the ceremonial connected with the journey of such a Sovereign. I had to appear in Paris with a large suite, and accompanied by a court marshal, aide-de-camp, and secretary. In these respects King Leopold had undertaken to have all that was necessary settled in advance in Paris, and I was therefore soon able to prepare for the journey. The only difficulty about the situation was the consideration for my brother, whose position in England made it impracticable for me to declare myself to the Emperor Napoleon straight out as a representative of the House of Coburg. In consequence, too, of the personal sympathies and antipathies, in respect of which I was naturally not entitled to anticipate the Queen and the Prince, my relations to the English Court had to be left entirely out of account.

Notwithstanding, my brother was highly displeased at my whole enterprise, and it came to a rather unedifying correspondence between us, in consequence of which I saw myself obliged to despatch a specially soothing message to London, the bearer of which was fortunately able to return with the following letter from the Prince.

‘I have received your letter through Samwer, who is returning to you again this evening. As I have spoken a great deal with him, I shall write all the less, and must refer you to him. I now entirely understand how you came to enact this episode, and that Uncle Leopold is alone responsible for it. Although this does not in any way alter the matter, nor the manifold dangers that it conceals, yet it must be as agreeable to you to know that I acquit you of direct responsibility, as it is agreeable to me to know you quit

of it. If you are *extremely careful*, as I firmly believe you will be, we may hope that fortune will aid us and avert the dangers that have been conjured up. But even if Fate should ordain it otherwise, my brotherly love for you shall and will remain unaltered. Victoria sends you her best love.'

On the 3rd of March, when this letter, characteristic as it was of the view taken by the English Royal Family, was written, I had already set out on my diplomatic journey. I left Gotha on the 25th of February, in order first to proceed to Berlin. I had already applied to the King of Prussia in a letter asking him to receive me on the following day. I wrote to him that I was repairing to the Court of the Tuileries, at the desire of my relations, and that I presumed it would be agreeable to His Majesty to find, in my insignificant person, a devoted mediator, in respect of various ticklish points in the present questions, or at least to gain information through me on many things, which it might be difficult to obtain by the usual means of diplomacy.

Frederick William IV was prepared in every way, when I came to confer with him. Nor was the intrinsic purpose of my journey, and my view of the whole situation, a secret to him. A fortunate circumstance had afforded me the opportunity, but a few weeks before, of stating my views and hopes in a memorandum to the King.

I cannot spare the reader the communication of this document, which was addressed to the King at a time when there was not the slightest idea of my journey to Paris; because everything that Frederick William then said to me for my guidance in Paris, gains far more significance in the light of this communication. The reasons for my diplomatic document are to be found in the circumstance that at the command of His Majesty a Circular Note, dated February 9, had reached my Government from the Prussian Minister, with the express notice that an answer on the part of the allies of Prussia would be very welcome. I therefore took this occasion to write to the King at once personally:

' . . . Although I have given orders to my Ministry to express in an official answer my pleasure at the resolutions

arrived at by Your Majesty's Government, I cannot refrain from personally communicating to Your Majesty my own humble opinions in face of the present critical position of affairs. They spring from a German patriotic heart, which is most especially devoted to Your Majesty.

'It cannot have escaped Your Majesty how warmly I have interested myself, since the year 1848, for specially German affairs, nor how I have succeeded, with my humble powers, in exercising an influence on so many factions in our great fatherland, and in gaining, as I may say without vain-glory, the confidence of a large portion of the intelligent middle class.

'Your Majesty will recollect, moreover, how I always placed at the head of my arguments the opinion, that it is only through Prussia that a Germany can be obtained, great danger and great humiliation averted, and the real kernel of Europe made what it possesses both the title and the qualification to be.

'So many endeavours in the years of agitation have remained fruitless owing to the circumstances of the times. But the period of weakness, of humiliation, and of moral relaxation in the nation has not discouraged me. I have remained true to my opinions, in spite of all animosities, and the greater the difficulties that offered themselves to me, the greater has been the activity that I have thought it incumbent on me to employ. The result has been, that I have been enabled to ascertain exactly the views and wishes in the German Fatherland; that, so far as the inner life of the nation is concerned, I have had to deal, not with phantoms, but with truth; that the hearts of many have opened themselves to me, and that I have been able secretly to appease, advise, and prepare.

'The dark power of Democracy, too, I have seen by daylight, and have found my view confirmed, that in itself it is merely a negative power, but that it will be a mighty one, if it should ever be established as a positive truth, that the nations are governed wrongly. Democracy, as a party, has destroyed itself. Its faint glimmer is maintained by the mistaken endeavours of the extreme opposite party. This latter

was *bound* to wish it kept alive, because it was only in this thought that it discovered its own power. So many measures of so many German Governments have vied with one another in these endeavours, and I may perhaps ascribe it to personal efforts alone, if, from disgust, impatience, and perhaps want of judgment, many a distinguished ability has not joined the scum of our population.

‘I will not enter into a description of the indirect pressure to which Russian preponderance is subjecting all Europe, and which, with an iron hand, has been brought to bear upon Germany particularly. Your Majesty has not remained unaware of it. Neither will I recall the wounds which, proceeding from that influence, have been inflicted upon German life and German honour. But I should like to convince Your Majesty that, with the faintest hope of seeing the true equilibrium established, a feeling of delight is already pervading every German land. All eyes are turned upon Your Majesty. Everybody’s hope rests in Prussia, and I have considered it my duty to nourish this hope more and more.

‘Though it will be attempted by many, whom I will not name, to inspire Your Majesty with the belief that, by alienating yourself from the East, Your Majesty would be led nearer to the camp of this imagined power of democracy, you may believe me, that it will have exactly the opposite tendency. Democracy will be vanquished the moment this foreign pressure, which is felt and hated by all, is withdrawn from the nation and the Governments.

‘The situation appears to me to be simply as follows : The great ascendancy which Russia has dexterously obtained, by taking advantage of every possible circumstance, was likely to induce her to think also of territorial changes. The war against the Porte, which is as unreasonable as it is unjust, has opened the eyes of Europe on this point. The Western Powers, although they have never desired the war, are now the first to endeavour to force Russia to keep within the bounds within which she must move, unless the rest of Europe is positively to suffer. If the Western Powers receive no assistance, a great European war will be the inevitable conse-

quence. In this war, like in a revolution, all things will be subverted. To the fortunes of war, and, to many an accident, will then be left the decision of questions which cannot be *permanently* decided, except in the council of kings, and in unison with their peoples. That Germany *cannot* go with the East, is a positive fact. The question is merely, in what way the German Great Powers, and particularly how Prussia, can assist the Western Powers, in order to prevent this great calamity,—a universal war.

‘Your Majesty has often deplored with me the fact that so many Germans work in direct opposition to the interests of the joint fatherland, and some have, unfortunately, not given up the idea of a coalition for the East and against Your Majesty’s Government. Steps have even been taken to win over Your Majesty’s most faithful allies to this idea. Only the correct view on the part of Austria has momentarily checked a further advance in this direction. But it will depend upon Your Majesty’s determination, whether all these plans will vanish like an idle vapour. If Your Majesty is firmly resolved to afford assistance to the West, you will have to find voluntary allies in the German people—forced ones in their Governments.

‘May Your Majesty believe that no one can conceive, like I can, how hard it must be for you to have to offer such serious opposition to a beloved brother-in-law, a man of the greatest qualities, and an ally who in other respects is so greatly revered. But the welfare of Europe demands it, and—much as it is endeavoured on many sides to persuade Your Majesty of the contrary—it is the desire of the entire nation. You will be acting in a just cause, and fulfilling the sacred duty of restraining your powerful neighbour from an enterprise that cannot but prove ruinous to himself.

‘May Your Majesty pardon me this frank language. But I feel justified in using it, as your faithful adherent, as a German Sovereign, and as the head of a house which has a positive interest in this question, and whose views I am expressing to you.’

The King had not yet answered this letter, when I had

to announce to him, immediately afterwards, my journey to Paris and arrival in Berlin. I could therefore assume that, following on my memorandum, he would at once recognise the significance of my journey, and take his measures accordingly. The more agreeable to me was the unusually friendly reception accorded to me by the King, when I called upon him on the 26th of February. He said that my mediation gave him genuine satisfaction, and that he had been highly pleased on hearing of my determination; that I might give the Emperor Napoleon every assurance of his friendship, and convey to him the King's wish for the most active personal relations. I could expect, according to this, that the King would be willing to receive any hints of mine from Paris, supposing I were to be in a position to give any.

The Russian party in Berlin, on the other hand, exerted its utmost endeavours to weaken the significance of my mission. Whilst some of the newspapers indulged in all sorts of gibes on the subject of my journey to Paris, the King, during my presence at the Court of Napoleon III, was successfully prevailed upon to take steps which, though not absolutely opposed to, yet weakened as much as possible, the effect of my negotiations. Frederick William IV had suddenly entered into a new phase of friendly intimacy with Russia. A few days after I had spoken with him in Berlin, he sent General von Lindheim with assurances of neutrality to St. Petersburg, and wrote a letter to the Emperor Napoleon, which the Prince of Hohenzollern was to deliver personally. This letter was expected just at the time when I was about to leave Paris.

Meanwhile, I had arrived at my uncle's in Brussels, to confer with him in detail on the questions that had to be discussed in Paris. The King had sent me a specification of the points which, according to his opinion, were essential, and had indicated the attitude which I was to maintain in the several questions towards the Emperor. King Leopold, in his quick and ingenuous manner, chiefly took account of the practical facts, and thereby materially facilitated our subsequent conversation. It is of some interest to know the exact views of my uncle at this important juncture. 'The various

points,' he wrote, 'present themselves, it may be said, in the following order

'1. A great many courteous messages from here, with the expression of satisfaction that our neighbourly relations have now become so good.

'2. A polite acknowledgment of the circular,* which was written in a kindly sense. However, a little opening for Albert's objection might perhaps be found, unless *just* the sole family policy that appeared very suspicious to the Emperor Louis Napoleon, should be that of acting against him. *Momentanément*, Albert has been mentioned as cherishing particularly hostile feelings against him. To soften this impression is of direct practical advantage, whatever the future may have in store.

'3. To speak with the utmost precaution on general politics. To praise the Emperor Napoleon for his peaceful endeavours. To call upon him to continue to devote himself to this noble end, for which his position is especially favourable.

'4. To say that an immense deal depends upon the two German Powers. That Austria and Prussia, let it be hoped, would take up the same line as the maritime Powers. To advert casually to Prussia's wish, but with caution, as they are purposely very indiscreet in Paris, and anything of the kind from Prussia would alarm rather than please them.

'5. By no means to express hostile feelings against the Emperor Nicholas. If these matters should be touched upon, observe, what is true, that the Emperor Nicholas has deceived himself—perhaps, too, in consequence of his servants not always daring to tell him the truth. To take up this position is desirable, because we shall always be able to operate with more advantage, if we are not considered as averse to Russia, whereas joining in the chorus against exaggerated Russian influences would lead to nothing but the idea that in case of need we should be good for *nothing*.

'6. It is desirable to let the Emperor himself talk as much as possible, which he is not fond of doing. His ambition is now to appear particularly loyal and honest and disin-

* The one mentioned above on page 47 is meant.

terested. This is especially desirable for his personal position, and for that of Europe. Perhaps, too, it is true. The greatest prudence in every kind of utterance will be extremely necessary.

‘7. To speak of Victoria and Albert, as *coming from you*, can be avoided. If he begins on this subject, the strict truth should be told, that Victoria and Albert can be relied upon, and that they will be most faithful allies. If he gives a polite message, you will listen to it politely. He will probably confine himself to generalities, as it is.

‘I would not remain too long. If you live in the Tuileries, it will be more costly and embarrassing. It would be pleasanter only to accept the carriage, and to live in an hotel. I send you this little *aperçu* as an *avant-garde* with my best “good-morning.”’

My uncle referred me, besides, to Mr de Praedt and Vicomte de Conway in Brussels, who were to coach me especially ‘with regard to the Parisian *terrain*.’

In the ensuing conversations with the King himself, however, the differences between my opinions and those of my uncle took so decided a shape, that I had some trouble in dissuading him from his point of view. Pleased as the King had been at my journey, which he called a service of love rendered to him, he could not familiarise himself with the idea that, in consequence of that journey, the Russian connections would have to be broken with. He was hardly to be dissuaded from his idea, propounded under the fifth of the above-mentioned heads, that there should be no show of animosity against the Emperor Nicholas. My objections, which were based upon the circumstance that the latest Franco-Russian correspondence, with its allusion to Moscow, made it scarcely possible to refrain any longer from declaring ourselves either as friendly or hostile, produced but little impression upon my uncle.

Just at this moment, however, the news arrived that the Anglo-French ultimatum had been delivered in St Petersburg. Thereupon the King confessed, though with a heavy heart, that there appeared, for the moment, to be no possibility of

adjustment, and that it would scarcely be advisable to 'punt' on the old friendship of the Emperor Nicholas, if we intended to approach Napoleon.

Also with regard to the outward arrangements in connection with my journey, everything came differently from what we had expected. Louis Napoleon had at once determined to let his hospitality shine forth in such a brilliancy of official reception, that all half intentions or ambiguity as to the form of my visit came to an end.

It was the first time that a reigning Prince appeared in the new Empire, and the first time, for many years, that the gates of the Tuileries could be thrown open again to receive a German Sovereign as a guest.

My official reception commenced at the frontier. The moment I had touched the soil of France, I was treated as the guest of the Emperor. A special train conveyed me to Paris. I had to submit to all the honourable distinctions that are customary on such occasions. The orderly officers of the Emperor, General Roguet, Captain Maurand, and the Emperor's chamberlain, Bellmont, received me in Valenciennes. I walked along the front of the guard of honour, lunched in company with the staff-officers of the garrison, was waited on at several stations by the Prefects, and was received in Paris in the afternoon by Marshal Vaillant. A battalion of infantry did the honours, and, accompanied by a squadron of Chasseurs, I drove to the Tuileries, saluted by the crowds who thronged the streets. The Emperor, with his whole Court, received me in the rooms of the Marsan pavilion, which had been got ready for me, and which was for once to witness conversations such as seemed scarcely in harmony with its traditions. It reminded one of the mutability of time. The Emperor himself conducted me to the rooms of the Empress, where I had not been expected so soon, and where, in consequence, there was at first a little scene of embarrassment. I thereupon remained alone with the Emperor and the Empress, was overwhelmed by both with attentions and expressions of thanks for my visit, and at once felt that, not only could my enterprise be considered useful in a political respect, but that I

personally might hope to have acquired a valuable connection.

After a few visits, which I paid to the Grand-Duchess Stephanie, Princess Matilda, and King Jerome, we met at seven o'clock at dinner in the Tuileries, directly after which a larger reception was held.

At dinner every one appeared in civilian dress. The well-known names of the company that assembled later on in the evening, might have made one fancy oneself transferred back to the beginning of the century. There before me stood the King of Westphalia himself, and next to him a young Prince Murat.

All the recollections which my father and my uncle had kept of the first Empire, and which many a story, told by them, had deeply impressed upon my youthful mind, seemed to have assumed life and form again before my very eyes.

My interest was excited most by King Jerome, as the real and genuine representative of the older times, who was still moving about the salons of the Tuileries, as active and talkative as I so well remembered him from innumerable descriptions in history and romance in his palace at Cassel. I entered that evening into an animated conversation with the old gentleman, and was invited by him to discuss the position of affairs with him at greater length in the course of the next few days.

The King gave me the impression as if he judged the position of the Napoleons in Europe without any personal aspirations, taking a really unbiassed and, as it were, bird's-eye view of it. He said that, for his nephew's sake, and for that of the Bonapartist cause, he was obliged to watch carefully that the Emperor was not driven by his surroundings into the dangerous course pursued by Napoleon I. For of nothing had his experiences given him a firmer conviction, than that by venturesome wars the Napoleons would again forfeit their throne. He was a man of peace, who would always strenuously oppose any member of the family who showed a spirit of enterprise.

In later years, as is well-known, King Jerome really aimed at paralysing the restless spirit of the Empress by means of

his influence. In those first conversations which I had with the old King, he once went so far as to say that, of all the Napoleons, he was the one who knew the German nation best; he was therefore of opinion, that the safety of the Imperial throne in France could only be attained by an alliance with Germany. The English alliance was not sufficient, and was, besides, much too dangerous, by reason of England's many entanglements. 'The Napoleons,' he went on to say, 'had no luck. To assume the contrary was to disregard this truth. The Emperor could only maintain his position by means of the greatest prudence and reserve.'

Indeed, on glancing at the persons who were now assembled in the Tuileries, there was hardly a man to be found among them, from the highest downwards, who did not remind one of the vicissitude of human fortunes!

Men and things seemed to be present here merely as proofs of the rapid changes that take place in the affairs of this earth. Whilst the new host in the Tuileries seemed to revive the memories of the great world-conqueror of the century, all the household surroundings bore witness, in every detail, to the existence of the Monarchy. All and everything reminded one of the exiled Louis Philippe, in particular the appointments, the plate, even the very napkins, which still bore the monogram of the last King of France. I recognised the furniture and pictures, and even some of the Court-servants, whom I had so often seen here under Louis Philippe.

The Emperor was little changed since I had made his acquaintance in London. He had only grown stouter, and the well known disproportion between his body and his short legs had become more conspicuous than in former days. His manner in receiving me was in every respect natural and easy, indeed, like that of an old acquaintance, so that our intercourse from the first evening was divested of all restraint.

The Empress did fullest justice to the reputation of her great beauty and amiability. We remembered at table that I had seen her at Buckingham Palace on the occasion of a ball, when I might have numbered myself among so many other admirers of her charming manner. But she turned the con-

versation very quickly, and without further ceremony, to the present state of politics. She said it was dreadful to her to think that we were on the eve of a horrible war, which nobody had desired, and nobody would profit by. The present complication was due exclusively to the blunders of the diplomatists in St Petersburg and Constantinople. The personal ambition and the personal attitudes of these men had led to the abominable dissensions, which were, in fact, hardly intelligible to Frenchmen. Nobody here could feel the slightest enthusiasm for the war.

When I expressed my entire concurrence in all these things, and added, that the period of cabinet wars, which had so often been called forth by diplomatists, had always been believed to be over, she remarked, with an amiable allusion to my visit, that the only pleasant circumstance she could see in the matter, was the fact that the reigning Sovereigns were at last becoming personally acquainted with each other. I replied that it would afford me infinite pleasure, if my arrival had given their Majesties satisfaction. I assured her, at the same time, that I had always made it my task to be truthful and frank in everything, but particularly in political matters, whereupon she expressed herself as convinced that the Emperor, too, valued these qualities above everything, and that she was glad to be able to tell the Emperor what I had said.

The following morning I had an opportunity of hearing the Emperor enlarge on the political situation, and I really gained the impression that he meant to discuss these matters with unexpected freedom and candour.

Napoleon sent to announce his visit, and when he entered, I delivered to him the insignia of the Order of the House of Coburg, which he accepted with great pleasure. We entered at once into a long conversation, which lasted an hour-and-a-half, and during which he frequently paced up and down the room, becoming very animated.* He explained the policy

* The following account of my conversations with the Emperor Napoleon was written down at the time when the impressions they left were still fresh in my memory. In reproducing it here, I have therefore thought it desirable not to alter anything. What might perhaps have become more polished in style, would probably have lost in faithfulness and originality.

he had pursued during the past years, his love of peace, and his intentions, which, as he assured me again and again, differed entirely from those of his uncle. His speech sometimes quite assumed the form of an academic lecture. He launched forth into the history of the first and the second Empire, and the distinctions to be drawn between them. His mode of discoursing had something extremely instructive, and reminded one of the reasonings which Germans are fond of commending as 'objective.'

He said the policy of his uncle had aimed much too much at influencing the course of other States, and at oppressing them. The consequence had been a reaction on the part of the humiliated nations, and the events of 1814 and 1815. Now, however, the consciousness of their national rights had so grown in the people, that it would be crediting him with folly to think that he could once more tread the mistaken paths of his uncle.

As to the present complication, the cause of all the evil was the immense influence of Russia, which he himself had encountered in all corners for ever so many years. In illustration, as it were, he cited the question of the recognition of his title. If Prussia and Austria had not been so entirely subject to the despotic commands of Russia, the Eastern Question would never have been raised. 'I do not like the war,' he said, 'but it has become a necessity, and I only wish it may end as soon as possible. But this is only possible by an alliance with Austria and Prussia, which I am seeking solely and exclusively to this end.'

'The neutrality of one of these two Powers, Prussia, seems to me to be very dangerous, because it is not only prolonging the war, by diminishing the means of action, but it would also have the inevitable result of opening the gates to all kinds of intrigue, and bringing about new complications. To my great regret, and in spite of my wishes, the necessity might arise of attacking the neutral Power, the consequence of which would be war in the heart of Europe.'

When the discussion took this turn, I put an end to the conversation, during which neither England nor Belgium had

been mentioned, by repeating the friendly messages I had been commissioned to deliver from the King of Prussia. I hoped still to find an opportunity of enlightening the Emperor on the subject of German affairs, and tried to avoid creating the false impression, as if I were in a position to interpret the official steps of the Prussian Government.

A day or two after the above conversation, the Emperor expressed the desire to discuss with me, in a more detailed fashion, the question of an alliance with the two German Powers. He appointed the 6th of March for the purpose, reserving a sufficient portion of that day to allow of our devoting ourselves to the object in view without fear of interruption. When I visited him in his study, he began by saying he had received information from Berlin, that no decision had as yet been arrived at. This troubled him a good deal, as the question of the embarking of the troops was approaching nearer every day. 'We will discuss the matter to-day,' he added, 'as if we were private individuals, and as we have ample time before us, I would ask you to give me a detailed statement of your views. I will take the liberty of expressing mine, without any regard for persons or nations.'

I replied at once that I would follow his suggestion with pleasure, but that he must accept my assurance that the views I expressed were chiefly my own. He must therefore take all I said as the expression of my private opinions. He thereupon held out his hand to me, and said, '*Allons donc, entre amis on ne se trahit pas.*' I now discussed the question of the alliances, and put forward the premise that it would be impossible to bring the Prussians to a speedy decision: (1), unless the dangers were first removed which, even supposing them to have an anti-Russian leaning, would necessarily deter them from entering at once into the desired alliance; (2), unless direct advantages were offered to them.

The Emperor acknowledged this to be correct, and said: 'As to the advantages, it was impossible for him to take any steps, even if it were officially demanded, because of the binding declarations made to England. But he would leave it to Prussia's own good sense to see that, if she took an active

part in the war, it could not be to Prussia's disadvantage.' He then added, laughing, in German, 'The Prussians surely do not imagine that they are to go to war for nothing, or to gain no territorial advantages by it.

'But, after all, what are the wishes of Prussia? Hanover? Saxony?'

I replied that the disinterested policy of Prussia would never permit her to cherish any decided wishes of this sort, but that sound common-sense made it intelligible, if she thought of a future union of her two great territorial expanses in the East and in the West.

We agreed, after this, on the one point, that it was impossible, in the first instance, to induce Prussia, by promises, to enter into the alliance. I explained, moreover, the difficulties Prussia would have to contend with in mobilizing her army, and surprised the Emperor considerably, by pointing out the dangers to which Prussia's left flank would be exposed from Denmark and Sweden, if it came to mustering her forces against Russia. Besides, that Prussia was greatly hampered by the affairs of the Confederation, whose desire was to preserve a neutral attitude, in consequence of which it was rendered difficult for Prussia to advance alone.

The Emperor was of opinion, that if Prussia and Austria were equally desirous of the alliance, the rest of the confederation, true to the two colours to which they belonged, would be glad to follow suit.

I replied that he appeared to forget the position of Bavaria, whereupon he said, '*J'ai cru que la Bavière soit entièrement autrichienne.*'

That this was a mistake, was not difficult to prove. I ventured to add, however, that, apart from all this, there was one thing which particularly prevented Prussia from declaring herself against Russia, and this was the distrust which was everywhere cherished against France, and especially against the person of the Emperor. At this remark he put on one of his most pleasant faces, and said that he found this very intelligible, but that he was at a loss to conceive in what the reason for such distrust could consist, now that his actions lay

open before the eyes of all Europe. He *could* only wish for peace, because the *bien-être* of France, and the mood of the French themselves, rigorously demanded it. It was just for this reason that he was urging the union of Europe against Russia, in order to avoid a long and fatal war. As to the fear that France might make common cause with the revolution in the other States, these ideas had been taken into account, not by him, but by others, in case Europe should once more unite against France, of which there was just now no prospect.

The conversation then turned to the plan of operation, which was about to be carried out against Russia. On this point the Emperor showed extraordinary perspicacity and foresight. Hence we quickly agreed in the assumption that Russia would never be forced to make peace by the movements of the Western Powers on the Danube, and by the appearance of the combined fleets in the Black Sea and the Baltic. It was just this circumstance which appeared to cause the Emperor real anxiety, and to produce in him the feeling of heavy responsibility, for he was about to embark his troops on an expedition which he regarded as almost fruitless.

I therefore alluded to the neutrality of the Scandinavian Powers, and observed that, instead of their being quietly suffered to remain neutral, an alliance ought to be urged upon them, for Russia would never submit to a settlement, unless she were made to fear an attack upon her in Finland. I had already pointed out this circumstance on the previous days, when the Emperor, in occasional and shorter conversations, repeatedly declared that all the fleets and armies in the world would never induce Russia, either to make peace, or to come to terms, so long as the point were not found where she was weakest. When I suggested that Finland should be given to Sweden, the Emperor smiled, and said that I appeared really to be no friend of the Russians, a remark to which I thought I could offer no contradiction in the present instance.

Upon weighing the situation afresh, Napoleon took up the matter more seriously, and enlarged upon it, as if it were a new idea which was worth considering. He observed, how-

ever, with regard to the policy of Sweden and Denmark, '*Nous sommes très vaguement informés; on nous dit que le Roi de Suède est très faible, et penche vers la Russie, mais que le Prince Royal, l'armée et le peuple sont plutôt contre la Russie.*'

He recognised that it was in the interest of the Western Powers to obtain better information on this point, but he remarked that after all most, if not everything, depended on Austria and Prussia. Of the former he said that she probably had more decided reasons than Prussia to enter into an alliance with the Western Powers, and after pausing for a moment, he added, with a significant accentuation, as nearly as possible the following words, which were not to be misconstrued: 'If it depended upon me, I should be most happy to let Austria have the Danubian Principalities; and if I were the Emperor of Austria, I should cling with less interest to Lombardy, which ever remains a yawning wound, always causes unsafety, and demands incessant sacrifices, whereas, *tôt ou tard*, a general rising will after all take place in Italy.'

Thereupon the Emperor passed on to the idea of the restoration of Poland, and said that he did not reckon in that case on the Prussian and Austrian provinces. He made no mention of the dynasty that would be necessary for a restored Poland. He enlarged, rather, in a general way upon the idea 'that when the war with Russia had resulted satisfactorily, a European Peace Congress would be absolutely necessary, to solve all the questions that had not been completely decided at the Vienna Congress, and to give the nations a permanent peace at last.'

What impression the Emperor's disclosures made upon me, it would be difficult for me to describe at the present day. Since that time the *Idées Napoléoniennes* have been frequently discussed. Much of what the Emperor hinted at, rather than expressed, in those days, is now sealed by facts known to everyone, and a good deal has at least been the subject of official discussions. At that time there was hardly anybody in Europe who could boast of having heard from the taciturn Emperor, clearly and distinctly, what he really anticipated

from the future, and what course he meant to give to the political world.

I was the first Sovereign to whom Napoleon had expressed himself with so much frankness and unreserve, and after these declarations I could not doubt that he really had much to find fault with in the map of Europe, and a good deal, if not everything, in the treaties of 1815. He considered the Eastern Question a matter which was suitable for territorial compensations. He kept his finger on Italy, and on Poland, and declared the idea of a Scandinavian Empire to be worthy of consideration. He did not doubt that Prussia would have to be enlarged into Germany, and he looked upon the German Confederation as just as decrepit as the state of the Apennine Peninsula. And this man was now Emperor of the French, and was on the eve of entering upon a great war, apparently in pursuance of a conservative programme, seeing that, for the so-called integrity of Turkey, the lives of thousands of French citizens were put to the stake.

Surprised, and even startled, as I in a certain measure was, by what Napoleon told me, I was none the less firmly convinced that the war which was about to be commenced, was only the beginning of a series of enterprises, in respect of which the Great Powers would recognise the necessity of taking up a decided attitude.

I therefore continued to write from Paris to Minister von Manteuffel in Berlin, in order, to some extent, to inform him of the facts. I thought I could assure the Prussian Government that I had succeeded in quieting the Emperor's mind with regard to the difficulties of an alliance. But nevertheless I added: 'He thinks, however, he should in any case require actual guarantees, to enable him to send large bodies of troops without apprehension into distant parts. On this ground he insists that the question, whether Prussia is an ally of the Western Powers or not, must be decided before the troops are embarked. The Emperor admits it to be fair that Prussia should render her participation subject to certain conditions.'

In the meantime I had a third conversation with the

Emperor with reference to the immediate situation, in which he asked me whether I was not inclined to take a letter to the King himself. He said he had altered his opinion concerning an immediate negotiation of the alliance with Austria and Prussia, and, as I had convinced him that it would involve the King in difficulties, he should prefer to submit to the Cabinets in Berlin and Vienna a plan of the war-operations, which might, later on, facilitate their entry into the alliance.

I declined this mission, with the remark, that I should only charge myself with such a letter, if I was first acquainted with its contents, and could approve of them. Hereupon the Emperor became very animated, and discussed the matter with me, as it were, before the eyes of the public. For he had linked his arm in mine, and we were walking up and down on the front esplanade of the garden of the Tuileries.

After having unfolded his plan of operation, he adverted again, and more pressingly than before, to the necessity of compensating Prussia and Austria. The opportunity afforded by this war, he said, must be used *pour régler la carte de l'Europe*. And when I drew his attention to the fact that all his plans were purely subjective, and that nobody would enter into them; that the policy pursued by Prussia in particular could merely be to increase her influence, but not her territory, in Germany, he suddenly became silent, paced up and down for a while, and then said dreamily, with the inimitable smile so peculiar to him: '*Ma foi, pour ma France ce m'est bien égal, si on me dédommage sur le Rhin ou en Italie.*'

I observed here that all these questions appeared to me of no immediate consequence, whereupon the Emperor expressed the wish, on general grounds, that the European Powers might learn to understand and agree with one another better than hitherto, adding that he would be only too glad, if his loyal intentions towards Austria and Prussia were taken note of in Vienna and Berlin.

We left the esplanade during these remarks, and the Emperor proceeded to examine me on the affairs of the Danish State and Royal Family, in respect of both of which he was

indeed so singularly uninformed, that he might well conclude with the words: *Mais toujours nous sommes très mal renseignés.*

The next morning the Emperor surprised me with a visit at breakfast, and handed me the draft of a letter to the King of Prussia, upon which he asked me to give him my opinion.*

The Emperor's letter, however, appeared to me to afford little prospect of causing the Prussian Government to abandon its neutral attitude. Fortunately, I was relieved from the onus of delivering it to the King, by the circumstance that in the meantime the mission of the Prince of Hohenzollern had been announced, respecting whom I could assure the Emperor that he personally took the same view as myself.

When Napoleon informed me that he shortly expected to receive '*une lettre de conscience*' from the King, he made all sorts of remarkable observations concerning him, and unfolded among other things, to my great surprise, a host of details as to the mode in which the King of Prussia was fond of shaping his policy. He said that the King was also in this respect thoroughly original, so that it had cost him great study to get to the bottom of it. I could not deny that the Emperor had, on the whole, a surprisingly accurate knowledge, both concerning State affairs in Berlin, and concerning the King himself. But I was still more astonished, when Napoleon told me, in his most ingenuous manner, that he was carrying on a peculiar kind of correspondence with the King. The King, it appeared, wrote to a German officer residing in Paris, in such wise that the letters were arranged for the Emperor, while the Emperor answered the King, in a similar way, through the same officer.

The Emperor, however, was already informed of the fresh changes of front which Frederick William IV had made during

*The contents of the intended letter are not without historical interest: *Mon-sieur mon frère . . . A la veille d'une guerre sérieuse*—it would be of the greatest consequence to know whether the King would agree to the plan of mustering in conjunction with Austria, a body of about 120,000 men near Cracow, whilst the Western Powers advanced with 70,000 men through the Danubian Principalities. To cover any attack on the part of the Danes and Swedes, the participation of Sweden in the war should be secured, and a French army corps should enter Finland. After the overthrow of Russia, it says in conclusion: *L'Europe verrait bientôt les Souverains réunis en congrès, fixer les bases de la paix et former entr'eux un bien indissoluble . . .*

the period of my presence in Paris in the first weeks of March, and his accounts agreed with those I had received myself. Whilst General von Groeben was to make the English Cabinet acquainted 'with the grounds of the simple and dispassionate policy of the King,' and to bear a letter to Queen Victoria, the '*lettre de conscience*,' as Napoleon expressed it, which the King had addressed to the Emperor, was a document, strange in more than one respect, in which the sentence actually occurred: *Le seul but de cette lettre est de prier V. M. du fond de ma conscience de ne pas refuser d'avance l'examen à ce sujet, et de me seconder dans la marche consciencieuse et toujours renouvelée.**

Though not a word had been exchanged on the subject, between Napoleon and myself, we seemed to be inwardly agreed that the King of Prussia would let the opportunity to act pass. His doing so appeared all the more regrettable, as public opinion in France was extremely favourable to a great coalition. The money-market regularly besieged the Governments that had determined to take up arms against Russia. On the 4th of March, Rothschild declared, during a visit which he paid me, that for a war with Russia any sum was at command; he would furnish at once 'as many millions as were desired.'

In spite of all this, it had become clear that the Emperor could not carry out his wish, only to embark his troops, if Prussia took up a decided attitude. Besides, the uncertainty and suspense of the situation, which seemed to weary the army and the public in France, could not possibly last for long. The Emperor once asked the captain of the guard during dinner, how his regiment had received the news of its impending departure. 'Sire,' answered the captain, 'there was not a man among them who did not shout with joy on hearing the news.'

If I had desired, however, that my excursion into the region of great international relations should end in Paris itself, I was soon to find out my mistake. Once involved in these affairs, I soon saw a burden laid on my shoulders, which

* Geffcken, Zur Geschichte des Orientalischen Kriegs, pp. 81, 82.

forced me to a diplomatic activity that seemed never to end. The Emperor wished to continue communicating and exchanging opinions with me, though our direct correspondence was to be confined to the smallest possible limits.

We agreed to employ an agent, whom I shall often have to name in the following chapters, and who belonged to that class of high political personages, little known and still less often mentioned, who, just by virtue of the unofficial character of their positions, not unfrequently exercise an important influence on the course of affairs.

My uncle had referred me in Paris to Prince Chimay, whose services he had enlisted in my behalf. It was here that I first made his acquaintance, and we entered at once into personal and extremely intimate relations. Prince Chimay was not exactly the ambassador of the Belgian Government, but the family representative of King Leopold at the Court of the Emperor. He was the son of Theresa Cabarrus, from whom he had inherited the proud consciousness of her famous name. He belonged, in consequence, as naturally to the modern aristocracy of mind as, in virtue of his descent and estate in France and Belgium, to the most distinguished, though perhaps not exactly ancient, nobility.

He was an acute observer and an excellent correspondent. He wrote with cleverness and ease, and was unpretending enough to let his excellent reports on persons and affairs in France be buried in my and my uncle's archives. He was an intimate friend of King Jerome, and had obtained, through him, a more familiar acquaintance with the Emperor. His amiable wife was connected with the family of Napoleon by birth, and was treated by Napoleon himself like a friend and kinswoman, which facilitated in many ways the intercourse of the Prince.

The relations which I kept up with Chimay, as long as he lived, were so comprehensive, that the reader of my Memoirs will still find ample opportunity of becoming acquainted with him. For years my correspondence with Napoleon passed through Chimay's hands. The Emperor had authorised me to make suitable use of our confidential communications in Germany, and particularly at the Prussian and Austrian

Courts. It was taken as a matter of course, too, that I should give confidential information, both in Vienna and Berlin, of the ever recurring points of the revision of the European map, as contemplated by Napoleon.

It was more difficult for me to fulfil the wishes of the Emperor and the Empress with regard to my English relations, and in this respect I had frequently to endure the most painful situations. Those who in later years may have read in the newspapers the touching accounts of the friendship of Queen Victoria for her unfortunate sister of France, or those who consider my brother's rapturous descriptions of his intercourse with Louis Napoleon in the 'Life of the Prince Consort,' will hardly picture to themselves that there was a time when, at the mere mention of my brother's name at the Court of the French Imperial family, many a drop of perspiration might have been seen on my brow.

The Empress, in particular, by questions, allusions, and remarks, respecting the English Royal Family, managed to cause me many a trying hour at the Imperial dinner-table. On one of these occasions, I had succeeded for a long time in keeping the conversation confined to the newest Parisian fashions, and to the little gallantries which, in the society of this charming woman, were at all times as gladly offered as they were received. But, with great dexterity, the Empress suddenly contrived to again introduce the topic of the English family, asking very *naïvely*, how the Duke of Cambridge, who was shortly to pass through Paris, was related to the Queen of England. Although it was easy to satisfy this thirst of the Empress for genealogical knowledge, I still had the presentiment that I should not be likely to get off the rocks of English family affairs so soon, and my brother rose up at once before my mind's eye, with his most forbidding look, and in the act, as it were, of strictly weighing every word I uttered.

Indeed, the Empress had already launched into a flow of personal admiration for Queen Victoria, my brother, and their children. She spoke of her longing to become better acquainted with them, and of the duties of a Sovereign, which it must be doubly difficult for a woman to fulfil.

The compliments I interposed, with reference to the veneration which the Empress herself enjoyed, did not prevent her from ingeniously continuing in her argument: 'Ah, if only all queens had been as excellent and virtuous as the late Queen of Portugal and Queen Victoria!' But one need but look at her own unhappy country, to see what harm could be done by a queen. She was excessively devoted to Queen Isabella, who was a very good woman, but her Court was after all too badly regulated, and King Louis Philippe had caused all the misfortune of the Queen and her country, by bringing about her unhappy marriage. The French had always been unpopular in Spain, and she herself had been a witness of the dangers that at all times attended the public appearance of the Duke of Montpensier in Madrid.

At last, looking me straight in the face, she concluded with the words: *L'Espagne n' a qu'un espoir, c'est le roi Ferdinand*. At the mention of my cousin, my brother's threatening looks at once occurred to me again, and as the Empress, alluding to the fact that the Spaniards had not yet got over their preference of Prince Leopold as a husband for the Queen, appeared desirous of starting the subject of a second Spanish marriage, I turned the conversation with a little pleasantry, saying that every European prince would be happy to receive a crown from the fair hands of the Empress: and whether she had not got one for me?

The merriment which this remark caused, and in which the Emperor joined, brought me relief, and put an end to the dangerous dialogue.

However, though I could not submit to be cross-examined by the Empress with regard to my nearest relations, it was impossible for me to leave Louis Napoleon unsatisfied on these points. Being only too well aware of the obstinate prejudice that still existed against him in London, he urgently requested me to suggest to him some means of winning over the English Royal Family.

I thought it my duty to keep nothing from him that might serve him in attaining his purpose. I gave him various explanations and hints, drew his attention to the peculiarities

of the Queen and the Prince, and in this manner no doubt contributed something towards the satisfactory result of the memorable visits and meetings which took place in the course of the year between the English and French Sovereigns.

I felt all the more justified in venturing upon this rather dangerous ground, as I had meanwhile heard from Lord Cowley that my visit in Paris had given satisfaction in England, and that my brother was appeased.

The extraordinary and positively demonstrative friendliness with which the Emperor treated me before the eyes of all the world, did not admit the shadow of a doubt as to the brilliant success of my expedition. The embassies of all countries had, for many days, ample matter to correspond about, if they undertook to report to their Sovereigns what the Emperor had done for me.

He drove me about Paris for the most part himself, and showed me everything that was new and likely to interest me. Almost every day there was some grand festivity. Especially splendid were the Court concerts and the performances at the opera, where Cravelli, then at the height of her fame, was celebrating her greatest triumphs.

The Emperor seemed particularly desirous to let me see modern France shine also in her military glory. Two days after my arrival, a review took place at Versailles, and, the day after, another in the court-yard of the Tuileries. On the latter occasion, four regiments of infantry, four regiments of cavalry, and a troop of horse artillery, were led past. The Emperor likewise showed me the arsenals of Vincennes, and conducted me all through them himself. We drove there without any kind of escort. Even in the worst Faubourgs the people saluted us in a quiet and friendly manner. Still, the Emperor remarked that he had thought it judicious to have the streets macadamized. The Bourbons, who were otherwise most excellent people, had possessed no foresight, and had always lost their heads in times of revolutions. As he said this, the Emperor pointed to a spot in one of the trenches near Vincennes, where we were passing: 'The Duke of Enghien was shot here,' he observed, in a low voice, and

then added: *c'était une grande injustice de Napoléon.* As we entered the arsenals of Vincennes, it struck me that the soldiers scarcely recognised the Emperor. When their attention was roused, they showed themselves attached, but very quiet.

During our various drives through Paris, and at our meetings before and after dinner, in the theatre, or at the concerts, I had always an opportunity of listening to remarkable and instructive observations on the part of the Emperor, which enabled me, in a short time, to gain a pretty accurate idea of his inner character and being. He was far above the common run of men, and contrasted in every respect with his surroundings, and with everything that may be called specifically French.

Sometimes, during a quiet chat, when he would sit in his arm chair, smoking one cigarette after another, and conversing in a dreamy sort of way, he gave me more the impression of a German scholar, than of a ruler of France. On such occasions, he used to recite whole poems from Schiller, and took a pleasure in passing suddenly from French conversation to German.

Even when discussing politics, unless questions of a direct practical character were under consideration, he often spoke in such a way, that any one might have fancied himself in the midst of a society of German doctrinaires. 'I have an idea as to how Germany might best be constituted,' he once said, and thereupon developed with great complacency the system of the Trias, as if it were something quite new. When I observed to him that it had been condemned as often as it had been set up, and told him the reasons why, he answered with philosophic serenity: *C'est une des idées qui en théorie seraient excellentes, mais qui n'ont pas d'avenir, parcequ'elles sont impraticables.*

'But,' he then continued, suddenly speaking in German, 'as to great united Germany, it can neither be liked, nor tolerated, from the French point of view, because, if Austria were included, it would signify, after all, nothing but an aggrandizement of Austria.' What he admired in the

Germans, he then went on to say, was that they had not yet lost the hope of a united empire. The national sense of the Germans was really a power which was much stronger than all armies.

He would own, however, that he should be an ardent enthusiast for the union himself, if he were a German. But, under the circumstances, he could only regret, for Germany's sake, that the confederation of 1815 had afforded so little scope, and still fewer guarantees, for these ideas.

It seemed to me, after my stay in Paris, simply unintelligible, and only to be explained by the hatred of the parties whom the Emperor had vanquished, that he should be considered devoid of abilities.

I wrote at the time a short sketch of Napoleon, which I still consider to be correct, and in which I characterised the unfavourable view so widely current as to his ability, as a positive piece of absurdity.

A short conversation with him suffices to dispel this notion. Not that he ever tries to express himself on a subject at once in pregnant words, but every interesting side of it that is touched upon, produces a change in his otherwise immovable countenance, which shows the lively interest it awakens in him. He then expresses himself naturally and sensibly, sometimes wittily, and always without empty phrases and declamatory effect.

It is true, on the other hand, that he had a very slow manner of thinking, and that he struck one as having difficulty in understanding. He had a very cultivated mind, but his positive knowledge did not appear to exceed the ordinary measure in any subject. It was only in military matters that he was rightly credited with greater discernment, but he had no innate predilection for military pursuits. He showed a striking indifference with regard to the troops that were bound for the East.

As to his character, what was said of his close reserve and his distrustfulness, appeared to me to be in general well-founded. But when he liked, he could also be so frank and kindly that I was fully able to understand the remark of a

person closely connected with him, who said: '*C'est un homme qui ne ment jamais.*'—Strange as this opinion may appear, I thought it only required a partial qualification.

Though Louis Napoleon differed decidedly from his uncle, in so far as the latter had declared positive lying to be a necessary means of Government, still the truthfulness of the nephew by no means excluded a policy coupled with surprises and intentional inconsistencies.

I conclude here with the words which I employed at the time in my sketch of Napoleon III. In carrying out his plans, the Emperor shows calmness, assurance, and consistency, and according to what has been told me, on good authority, concerning his behaviour on December 2nd, he possesses a personal courage by far excelling that of his uncle. His firmness appears as the result of exact calculation. He has the great quality of not thinking himself infallible.

Mistakes that are pointed out to him, he acknowledges readily. Of self-conceit there is not a vestige in his nature, nor can he be accused of vanity. He has, it appears, a propensity to pleasure, and finds in pleasure an obvious satisfaction. He expressed to me, in a significant way, his desire for a pleasant life of retirement, such as was customary in the time of Louis XV. So far as I could see, he was moderate in the ordinary enjoyments of life.

He appears to love the amiable Empress truly, and with simple sincerity. But while grateful for favours received, he is said to have an unextinguishable memory for injuries.

These outlines, which, from the nature of the subject, exhibit chiefly the favourable sides of his character, may serve to qualify the unfavourable ones, as represented by History. In any case, the Emperor is a man of extraordinary parts. To have overlooked this has been the mistake, and at the same time the misfortune, of his opponents, both in France and on the thrones. He undoubtedly entertains great plans. If he at present comes forward as the defender of the liberty of Europe, the time may still come, when that liberty will have to be defended against him. To Germany he may become more dangerous than his uncle was.

It was on the 11th of March that I took leave of the Emperor, with the conviction that our relations could not have commenced under better auspices.

The Empress gave me some very tasteful presents for the Duchess, and Napoleon parted from me with the warmest messages for my uncle, to whom he had at the same time written a letter full of cordial thanks for my visit. His words with regard to my brother were characteristic: 'Remember me to your brother, whose great qualities I can appreciate, and who, I believe, is as friendly disposed towards me as you are. I should be pleased to be able to speak with him, as I have with you: *Mais la mer est entre nous.*'

CHAPTER III

EFFECT OF THE DUKE'S STAY IN PARIS.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.
—THE DUKE GOES TO BERLIN.—KIND RECEPTION BY THE KING.—
STRONG LETTER FROM QUEEN VICTORIA TO THE KING OF PRUSSIA.
—THE APRIL TREATY BETWEEN PRUSSIA AND AUSTRIA.—
FREDERICK WILLIAM IV SEEKS TO CONCILIATE THE EMPEROR OF
RUSSIA.—BUNSEN'S RESIGNATION, BONIN'S DISMISSAL, AND THE
PRINCE OF PRUSSIA'S DISAGREEMENT WITH THE KING.—PRINCE
ALBERT ON THE CHEVALIER DE BUNSEN.—THE KREUZZEITUNG
PARTY IN BERLIN.—PARTICULARS OF THE RUPTURE BETWEEN THE
KING OF PRUSSIA AND HIS BROTHER.—HOW BONIN WAS DISMISSED.
—LETTER FROM THE PRINCE OF PRUSSIA TO THE DUKE.—THE
DUKE PROPOSES TO GO TO VIENNA.—THE SITUATION THERE.—
LETTER FROM THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA TO THE DUKE.—THE
RUSSIAN PARTY IN VIENNA.—UNCERTAINTY OF AUSTRIA'S INTEN-
TIONS.—FAR REACHING PLANS.—THE DUKE'S NAME MENTIONED IN
CONNECTION WITH THEM.—THE EMPEROR FRANCIS JOSEPH.—HIS
CHARACTER AND VIEWS.—PRUSSIA'S INDECISION CAUSES HIM UN-
EASINESS.—WHAT HE THINKS OF NAPOLEON AND HIS PROJECTS.—
PRINCE METTERNICH.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—COLONEL
VON MANTEUFFEL ARRIVES IN VIENNA, AND THE SKY BECOMES
OVER-CAST.—THE RACE BACK TO BERLIN.—COLONEL VON MAN-
TEUFFEL GETS THE START OF THE DUKE.—CURIOUS RECEPTION
OF THE DUKE BY THE KING.—CONVERSATION WITH MINISTER VON
MANTEUFFEL.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—THE FOUR POINTS.
—THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE.—WRATH OF THE KING OF PRUSSIA.—
HIS LETTER TO THE DUKE.—THE PRINCE OF PRUSSIA TO THE
DUKE.—DEATH OF THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS.

WHEN I returned from Paris to Brussels, on the 12th^o of March, I found my uncle extremely satisfied with the success of my visit to the Tuileries. But he felt himself, nevertheless, more than ever confirmed in his conviction that it was undesirable to make an enemy of the Emperor Nicholas. Napoleon's open expression of his aversion to the treaties of 1815 struck him

as suspicious and unpleasant. Hence it was easily to be conceived that the friends of Russia declared all over Europe that my uncle, quite in contrast to my own political opinions, was at bottom a thorough Russophile, and at any rate a true friend of peace.

Princess Lieven, the most famous of the agents in Russia's employ, was especially indefatigable in persuading her correspondents, both in England and in Paris, that my uncle was far from agreeing with his politizing nephew. Of my brother, too, the same people asserted that the Russian Emperor possessed numerous letters from him, which clearly showed his leaning towards the cause of Russia.—Albert remarked to me on this score: 'My correspondence with the Emperor Nicholas has been confined to announcements of the births of my children; it may therefore be presumed to be as uninteresting as it is harmless.'

All these intrigues, however, proved, what importance the Russians attached to the relations into which I had entered with the Emperor of the French.

My brother was also satisfied with my visit to Paris, and wrote me, on the 22nd of March, the following gratifying letter:

'I postponed answering your hasty lines from Brussels, until I had read the memorandum which you handed to Uncle Leopold for transmission to us. It reached me only yesterday, and I hasten to express my pleasure at the way in which you have treated the various questions with the Emperor, and at the clearness with which your *aperçu* of these interesting conversations is written. I agree with *every word* you have said to him, and I find in his answers just the ideas and the spirit which we have hitherto had reason to attribute to him. For Germany—if she desired, or were able, to do her duty—there could be no happier combination, in this serious crisis, than the intimate alliance of France with us. Prussia's behaviour . . . will yet end in bringing down a curse on the poor fatherland.

'That Prussia cannot allow herself to be pushed forward first in the war, or that she ought not to be pushed forward,

this I understand perfectly. Besides, it would be a matter of tolerable indifference to the Western Powers, when she entered into the contest, provided they had some certainty as to the intentions, the firmness, and the consistency, of the Prussian Government. The idle talk of Prussia's not being interested in the question is simply preposterous. Prussia has a much more direct interest in the matter, than either England or France. It is a question of life or death for Germany, whereas for us it is of quite a secondary kind. The Russian Colossus is pressing heavily against the whole long, long line of the Prussian and Austrian frontiers, whereas we have no point of contact with him whatever, excepting that of the indignation excited here by his monstrous violations of rights in all parts of the Continent. I am sending you the secret documents which have just been published. (The Emperor Nicholas and Sir Hamilton Seymour). Whose eyes are not opened on reading and comparing their contents with what has now happened, him God hath stricken with blindness, and He seeks to destroy him. That some clear-sighted people still exist in Germany, is proved by the pamphlet: *Russia, Germany and the Eastern Question*, by Gutav Diezel, published in Stuttgart. It is a master-piece.

‘Our war preparations are progressing apace, and twice as quickly as those of the French. The fleet in the Baltic will be magnificent, unless it be somewhat too heavy for that shallow sea. The 25,000 men for Constantinople are organized; 10,000 of them have already arrived in Malta; the artillery has left; and the cavalry will go by way of France, and march through Paris, at the Emperor's desire! Who could have imagined such a thing a year ago.

‘I can't understand the Prussian Chambers, who are accepting their fate in sullen silence. But now farewell. I am sending this letter to Berlin. If you should have left already, it will be sent on to you in Coburg.’

I had, indeed, gone to Berlin on the 19th of March, immediately after my return from Brussels, in order to report personally to the King on my stay with Louis Napoleon. He received me with the exclamation: ‘You have ventured, a

second Daniel, into the den of lions.' He could not find words enough to commend my expedition, which he called a most meritorious and fortunate one. He was very glad, he said, that the ice had at last been broken between Napoleon and the old families, and that means were now at hand of establishing a friendly intercourse with the Emperor of the French.

With reference to my attitude on the question of Prussia's position, I was especially praised by the King for having so correctly and effectively managed to state the reasons for Prussia's reserve. It was as if a load were taken off the King's heart, when he heard from me, and afterwards also from the Prince of Hohenzollern, that Napoleon did not mean to press the Prussian Cabinet too much for the present, but would quietly and confidently await its decisions. Unfortunately, the only inference the King drew from this assurance, was that he would be left to carry on his present unintelligible policy undisturbed. He was highly delighted at having gained time to shake hands once more with the Emperor Nicholas. The indecision of the Prussian Cabinet was perceptible everywhere.

Altogether, the situation seemed to be regarded with far less anxiety in Berlin, than in the rest of Europe, and the friends of Russia looked down with a sort of pity upon the political amateurs who were opposing the good old traditions of Prussia. Only the Queen appeared to take matters rather more seriously, and showed me less kindness than usual. When she expressed any opinion at all, it was only in words of distrust against Napoleon and his ogling with German liberalism.

When I came to take leave of the King, I was surprised to find that the Queen was present at the audience, and endeavoured, purposely, as it seemed, to keep the conversation on indifferent matters. The King, therefore, found no opportunity to speak of politics. That I could consider myself sufficiently enlightened, under these circumstances, will be easily conceived, and I may say, that the surprises to which the King treated the world in the course of the following weeks, did not altogether produce a very strong impression upon me.

If the direct answer which Louis Napoleon gave to the King, in consequence of the mission of the Prince of Hohenzollern, was, on the whole, full of consideration, attention, and patience, I will not exactly represent this as a result of my conversations with the Emperor. But it may be confidently asserted that, had the Emperor of the French at that moment poured the full vials of his wrath upon the head of the Prussian Cabinet, he would have met with the heartiest approval in England.

The simultaneous mission of General von der Groeben, as is well known, caused very great resentment in England, and the General returned from there with far worse experiences than the Prince of Hohenzollern from Paris. The letter which he brought back with him from Queen Victoria, and which had been written with the full approval of the English Cabinet, was couched in such plain terms, that it must have produced an almost stupefying effect on diplomatic circles. Queen Victoria has probably never put her signature to stronger words, than those with which she rejected Prussia's appeal for peace. In the sharp points of the style, the pen of my brother was easily recognisable: 'Your Majesty calls upon me to consider the matter in a conciliatory spirit, and to build a bridge for the Imperial honour . . . All the ingenuity and devices of diplomacy and of good will have been wasted in vain, during the last nine months, in attempts to construct such a bridge. The *Projets des Notes, des Conventions, des Protocols*, etc., have issued in shoals from the chanceries of the different Powers, and the ink that has been squandered in writing them, might be called a second Black Sea. But everything has failed, owing to the obstinacy of your Imperial brother-in-law. When Your Majesty informs me that you are now resolved to maintain an entirely neutral attitude, pleading in justification the desire of your people, I am at a loss to understand you. I should understand such language if it came from the Kings of Hanover or Saxony. But I have, until now, regarded Prussia as one of the five Great Powers, etc. etc.*

* This letter, which was carefully kept secret at the time, because it was feared that it might become known through the German Press, has now been published in the *Life of the Prince Consort*, III, 44, etc.

Whilst the King was receding further and further from the Western Powers, he at least endeavoured, as much as possible, to arrive at a better understanding with Austria, lest he should be left entirely isolated. The ends which he pursued in this direction, however, have never been clearly understood. Not without some reason, the *Kreuzzeitung* party declared it to be the intention of the Prussian Cabinet, by entering into a close alliance with Austria, to restrain her from taking any hasty steps against Russia, and, indeed, the agents whom the King was most fond of employing in his negotiations with the Emperor Francis Joseph, were men of the colour of Colonel von Manteuffel and General Gerlach.

Thus, on the 9th of April, the protocol between Austria and Prussia was concluded, upon which the treaty of the 20th of that month was based. The two German Powers guaranteed each other their territories, and agreed upon certain military measures, in case one or the other of them should be attacked while defending its interests, or in case the Russians should continue to occupy the Danubian Principalities, or should cross over the Balkans.

The Austro-Prussian treaty of April certainly did not evince any kind of aggressive tendency against Russia, and I have never been able to find that it was intended in Vienna to put any very comprehensive construction upon it. Notwithstanding, in St Petersburg, naturally, the greatest resentment was felt against the Prussian brother-in-law, and the latter endeavoured again and again, by small favours and great resolutions, to conciliate the Emperor Nicholas.

Among such small favours might, at that moment, be reckoned the cold treatment accorded at Court to the staff of the English Embassy, and on the other hand the marks of particular distinction conferred on persons whom the Emperor Nicholas had sent to Berlin. Moreover, every license was permitted to the reactionary Press in abusing the French and English Governments, and all those German Sovereigns who were suspected of being hostile to Russia. As I had at that time entered into a detailed correspondence on German affairs with my brother-in-law in Carlsruhe, certain sharp eyes,

which were accustomed to penetrate into all secrets, were naturally most keenly fixed upon us two.

Among the more serious steps, however, which Frederick William IV took, for the satisfaction of the Emperor Nicholas, there were three of particular significance. The removal of Chevalier de Bunsen from his post as Ambassador in London, the dismissal of General von Bonin as Minister of War, and the deplorable rupture between the King and his brother, the true-minded Prince of Prussia. Each of these events created much surprise, both among the general public, and in exclusively diplomatic circles. They were discussed in every possible shape, and gave rise to a good many false views. I was pretty well-informed on all these matters, and may perhaps be able to contribute something towards rectifying a good deal of what then gained currency.

As to Bunsen, my brother wrote a very detailed letter to Stockmar, which has been published in the newspapers only a short time ago.*

The origin of the quarrel was no doubt to be sought in the fact of Bunsen's having written a memorial in which he aimed at a division of Russia. The King gave his beloved Chevalier leave of absence, which the latter did not accept, demanding an investigation. As this was not fully granted, Bunsen resigned his appointment, and incensed the King to such a degree, that he declined all intercession in Bunsen's favour, even that of the Prince of Prussia.

However, Bunsen's faults were so well-known to all politicians in England, that his retirement cannot be believed to have been greatly regretted; and, in reading the letter my brother wrote to Stockmar, it should not be lost sight of, that the latter was Bunsen's friend, but not the former. To me Prince Albert had represented the matter rather more soberly, and since his letter of the 2nd of May enlarges in a general way on the situation, the greater part of it may be suitably inserted here:

‘ . . . Our alliance with Napoleon is, I believe, sincere and firm, and the national bickerings, at least on our side, have

* Cf. *The National-Zeitung* of January 7, 1882.

ceased. But there is a Russian party in Paris, of which we have no vestige here. Morny is said to be a Russian agent, and to intend accomplishing the ruin of Persigny. He is just now in Brussels with Princess Lieven, where Brunnov, Kisseleff, and Creptowitch, are executing their weird witch-dance round the seething cauldron. Uncle Leopold is always made content with the honourable prospect of being able to render Europe great services as future mediator. This harms him, and weakens me here. We preach, and—I fear—even give offence.

‘Sweden would be easily induced to take action against Russia, but everything must depend on the policy of Austria. That country holds the scales in *this* question. We have no reason to be dissatisfied with her. We have not once been belied by Austria during these complications, nor have we ever asked anything of her. But her own interests must drive her to turn Russia out of the Principalities. That it is desired in Austria that we should be the first engaged, is intelligible to us. We build no hopes on Austrian policy, but take our measures independently of her. Yet there is every reason to expect that Austria will take an active part against Russia later on. The Austro-Prussian treaty is still a secret to us But we trust again to the force of circumstances. As to bringing diplomatic pressure to bear on Prussia, we consider it would be no better than threshing straw Bunsen’s fall is known to you.

‘I entirely share your view, however, that it is best so for all parties. *Bunsen is the very reverse of a diplomatist.* His best qualities are the most dangerous ones he could have in this calling. In particular, his incredible fertility of mind and his imagination. In 1848, I saw at least five complete constitutions for Germany, and as many again for Prussia, all composed by him, and worked out down to the very smallest detail, and every one of them started from quite different principles. His conquest and division of Russia was a similar production. I took him to task at once—when I saw it—with regard to the Ernestine branch and Poland, and asked him: “Do you not see how this may compromise us all, and

what harm this patriotic fancy may do us?"—"Dear me, that is true. I am very sorry; I never thought of that," was his answer. Bunsen himself will be much happier at a distance from diplomatic affairs. That he has done me frequent and even very considerable harm, I know very well.'

Nor had I myself much regretted Bunsen's retirement. However, the agitation of Frederick William IV at the behaviour of this man, whom he had known and trusted so well, was after all greater than might have been expected. 'His chevalier had gone quite mad,' he said again and again, and since he only made this discovery, after the chevalier had violated the sanctity of Russia, the latter's fall, as well as that of the Minister of War, von Bonin, could safely be looked upon as the outcome of his great consideration and friendship for Russia.

As far as the Minister of War, in particular, was concerned, the measure adopted against him was the more surprising, as Herr von Bonin had just at that time been keeping strictly to the line of Manteuffel's policy, and had placed himself in full harmony with his Prime Minister. But Manteuffel had a better past, and was more agreeable to the Emperor Nicholas, than Bonin, whose whole attitude in latter years had appeared to argue opposition against Russia's policy. The effect of this difference was that the one remained and the other went.

From the point of view of military affairs, the dismissal of so excellent an organiser as Bonin was a matter of the greatest regret. It was no doubt chiefly this circumstance, coupled with the high estimation in which General von Bonin was held in army circles, that induced the Prince of Prussia himself to address the King in language more energetic than he had ever used until that moment, in spite of many a difference of opinion that had otherwise existed between him and his brother.

I had received accounts of these events from a friend in Berlin, who was very well informed, and to whose remarks therefore, the reader may probably attach some interest.

My correspondent first gives a good description of the feeling in certain circles of the capital, when he says: 'Your

Highness, who has had the courage to suggest the establishment of sound and genuine relations between France and Germany, is now declared by certain factions at Court, whose voice certainly has the ear of the Sovereign, to be the secret head of the Gotha party in Germany. The journey of your Highness to Paris is looked upon, in the pietistic Russian parties and camps here, as the starting point, or point of crystallisation, round which the liberal party in Germany, with the French sympathies of which it has always been accused, has once more gathered and constituted itself! These aspersions, which have suddenly dressed up a far-reaching and complicated conception of Gothaism under Your Highness' standard, might be regarded as an idle quibble on the part of our canting Muscovite friends, were it not for the intention to strip the party that is opposing Russia of its national importance.'

After having set forth how the *Kreuzzeitung* party intended to turn the Austro-Prussian treaty in favour of Russia, my friend goes on to say:

'This party spirit, fighting as it does with every weapon, has already succeeded in causing the Minister of War, von Bonin, who, in company with Herr von Manteuffel, has hitherto been endeavouring to balance the influence of the *Kreuzzeitung* men in the Cabinet, to resign his position. His portfolio has been taken by Count Waldersee, a trusty and devoted adherent of the *Kreuzzeitung* party. The King is said only to have given his consent after a long resistance, and not in an exactly cheerful mood.

'Herr von Bonin was opposed on principle to the policy of the Russophiles. He would have made absolute earnest of the military musterings suggested by the Austro-Prussian treaty. The political position of Herr von Manteuffel, if his present lingering at the head of the Cabinet can still be called so, has been deprived of an essential personal support by the resignation of Herr von Bonin.

'But it can hardly be said, whether the Prussian Prime Minister still requires such support, for, according to the present condition of affairs, his position can only be either

hopelessly lost, or hopelessly gained, and the men who have hitherto placed their hopes in him, are now almost obliged to fear the latter. Through his wife, who is entirely devoted to the *Kreuzzeitung* party, Herr von Manteuffel has always stood with *his half* on the ground of this party, and he has now declared himself quite agreeable to the task of fetching the chestnuts out of the fire for them. His enjoyments are not of the most pleasant kind withal, for he complains of not being able to digest his food, because his conferences with his Majesty are now generally fixed for after dinner.'

A few days later, the same correspondent reported the following particulars of Bonin's dismissal, and the share taken by the Prince of Prussia in this event.

'The letter which the Prince wrote to the King, immediately after the dismissal of our excellent Bonin, was not only couched in by far stronger terms than is generally known, but also contained declarations and renunciations which should have caused the King, according to remarks that were let fall by those nearest to him, to confine the Prince in a fortress.

'If the King, just at this juncture, showed rare moderation, such as he has scarcely ever exercised before, this was least of all a merit of the party who have his ear, and who are not wanting in endeavours of every kind to render the breach between the King and the Prince an irreparable and glaring one The influence of Prince Charles, who has opposed the Prince of Prussia, step by step, since the year 1848, seems just in this last conflict to have been more actively at work again.

But this time it was the King's own excellent nature which made him gain a remarkable victory, both over himself and over the party which surrounded him and urged him on. He declared that the letter of the Prince was one which ought not to be answered at once, and on which he would postpone his decision for twenty-four hours ! After this time had elapsed, the King penned an autograph answer to the Prince, in which all the motives and declarations contained in the Prince's letter of renunciation were entirely ignored, and the Prince

was merely informed, that the King granted him a furlough of four weeks to recreate himself in Baden-Baden, but that he reckoned all the more surely on the Prince's appearing before him again on the 6th of June, because the King this time felt a lively desire to commemorate, in loving union with his brother, the anniversary of the death of their father, the late King, on the 7th of June! My authority, whom I may name as a very intimate friend of the Prince, adds that the Prince, who, in the meantime, had already regretted several expressions in his letter, was much moved and touched by this turn.'

In a further letter he says:

'The dismissal of the War Minister, von Bonin, was not merely a personal concession on the part of the King, but the consequence of a direct request of the Cabinet in St Petersburg. This circumstance, which I learned afterwards, may justify my referring to the subject again to-day. The King sent for Herr von Manteuffel, and announced to him the occasion that had arisen, to necessitate Bonin's leaving the Cabinet. Manteuffel replied that His Majesty's commands should be carried out at once, and retired to draw up the necessary Cabinet order.

'The next day, Herr von Bonin had an audience of the King, at the conclusion of which His Majesty said: "I can only assure you of my unqualified approval, and express to you my fullest acknowledgment for all you have done for your department. But, nevertheless, I have to tell you, at the same time, that the ties which have hitherto wedded us, must be dissolved, and that I shall give you another appointment in a more distant garrison." Herr von Bonin bowed. When he re-entered the ante-chamber, Count Dohna, now the real head of the Prussian Russophile party, approached him and delivered into his hands the Cabinet order of the King, which had already been drawn up, and which transferred Herr von Bonin to Neisse. This is a garrison where the late War Minister will be under the command of Herr von L., a completely Russianized Prussian soldier, and a personal favourite of the Czar.

'Count Dohna entered into a conversation with Bonin, in

the course of which he reproached him with having been about to produce a schism in the Prussian army by his anti-Russian principles; upon which Bonin replied that it must have come to a pretty pass with the Prussian army, if it could divide on the question of its adherence or non-adherence to Russia. At this moment, the King, who had heard the very loud voices of the two gentlemen, sent out his Chamberlain to command Herr von Bonin's presence at the Royal dinner-party that same day. At the dinner table, Bonin received his place next to the Russian Ambassador, M. de Budberg, and on the other side a Russophile General, who had been placed on the retired list, a short time before, through Bonin's influence.

'Madame von Bonin recently put the question to Herr von Manteuffel at some party, how he could have sacrificed his best friend, whereupon Manteuffel replied, that His Majesty was entirely at liberty to keep and dismiss his Ministers, according to his wants and requirements.'

The incidents just described here, were in substance confirmed to me by Bonin, when he visited me in Coburg a few days after his discharge. Indeed it was unmistakable that a deep agitation had seized several very distinguished circles in the capital, and throughout all Prussia, and the question was already being raised on many sides, whether it would not be opportune to proceed to the formation of a party under the leadership of the Prince of Prussia. Several men were mentioned, who were said to be ready to go over to a strong opposition, such as Count Pourtales, Bethmann-Hollweg, Count von der Goltz, and others.

I had long ago entered into relations with this circle of politicians, but was not of opinion that the Prince of Prussia would, or could, place himself at the head of any party.

The moment I received the first news of the Prince's departure from Berlin, I at once addressed myself to him in a letter, the copy of which I have unfortunately lost, but in which I expressed my grateful approbation of the Prince's energetic behaviour. His extremely friendly answer from Baden, characteristic as it was of his whole manner, bore the

date of the 19th of May, and was couched in the following terms:

‘Your kind lines of the 16th inst. were a very precious proof to me of your sympathy and friendship. No less so your former interesting communications, some of which came from here—(of my knowledge of which, however, I have made no mention here). The bearer of those documents, S——, will have written to you, that I was about to reply to you—when the catastrophe occurred that has brought me here; so that I have not yet found leisure to write to you.

‘Although I never intended, by my momentary absence from Berlin, either to force the King to keep Bonin, or to follow my political views—since he is master, and entitled, after listening to advice, to issue his commands, and indicate the course which he intends to pursue—still, he could not demand of me that I should give up all my political convictions, known to all the world as they were, in order to assist him in changing over to another course: Lest, therefore, I should become inconsistent with myself, and before the world, I considered it advisable, by absenting myself from Berlin, to leave the King to decide as he liked, showing the world that I, as his first subject, am also the first to obey the King’s *commands*, but that I am not capable of *helping* him in executing a political change of front which runs counter to my convictions.

‘A lasting schism between the King and me *must* not occur, ‘I am therefore going with my family to Berlin, for the celebration of my silver wedding, on the 11th of June, whereby, it is to be hoped, the family peace will be re-established. However, I shall only remain there five or six days, and shall henceforward take no further part in political affairs, unless indeed this change of front towards the East should *not* succeed. The world has already recognised what my momentary absence signifies. It will see, by my future conduct, that I *must* keep peace with the King, but that I cannot identify myself with his intended policy, though I *must* obey him.

‘In what light I regard Alvensleben’s mission to Vienna,

I need not tell you. If I approved of it, I should be in Berlin, and not in Baden! How Prussia is to face the world with such political vacillations, I am at a loss to conceive. The alliance of the 20th of June was the end to which I firmly steered, and to the success of which I lent a helping hand, in obedience to the King's command. And should I now lend the same helping hand to destroy it? Nobody can demand this of me. Nothing but the fact of all Germany's joining this alliance, is capable of bringing back peace quicker and under different circumstances—perhaps even without bloodshed on the part of the Germans. But if Germany, out of fear for war, hesitates to join the alliance, then the schism in Germany will be sown again for a long time to come, and will be taken advantage of by the East and by the West! I find the temper of the people here excellent. But how will an understanding be possible in Bamberg, when Alvensleben's mission takes effect in the direction of that town? Thus Prussia will become the disturbing element in Germany, instead of being her safe-guard and leader.

'The rescript of the Emperor of Austria, on the occasion of the enormous levy of troops, is extremely fine and characteristic. It is *possible* to speak thus, when one's actions are consistent!

'When you discuss affairs in Vienna, take special heed of one thing, viz., that the basis of the Conference of Vienna be strictly abided by. Let there be no running after the chimera *de la rectification de la carte de l'Europe*, but rather let the Western Powers be restrained in this respect.

'I am writing to your brother for the second time to-day. My wife thanks you warmly for your remembrances, and sends you her kind regards. She is very downcast. —Your faithful friend,

'WILLIAM.'

Two points in the foregoing letter will require further explanation. As to the mission of Count Alvensleben to Vienna, it stood in direct connection with the retrogressive movements of the King in the beginning of May.

He required, that Austria should fix a term in respect of her demand that Russia should evacuate the Danubian Principalities. He had doubtless already been informed by the Emperor Nicholas, that the latter intended doing so of his own accord, as soon as the Western Powers had determined to attack him openly. His and the Czar's hopes were at that time founded on the assumption that the French, if they carried the war into the interior of Russia, were sure to experience a second Moscow, owing to the natural limitedness of their means. All, therefore, depended on restraining Austria, as long as possible, from taking any summary steps. Alvensleben was to gain this end in Vienna, by saying that the King of Prussia desired first to make personal representations to the Emperor Nicholas.

The other matter mentioned in the Prince of Prussia's letter, and touching me directly, had its special history, and will take up a good deal of space here. The Austrian Government could not fail to see that the moment when the question of the alliance would have to be considered by the Confederate States, could no longer be postponed for any length of time. In Court and Government circles in Vienna, I was credited with having a certain influence on a number of Sovereigns, and on public opinion in Germany.

After my return from Paris, it naturally became my task to seek relations also in Vienna, in order to bring the influence of my observations and my tendencies to bear on those who were in authority there. When the Prince of Prussia wrote to me, he knew that I was on the eve of carrying out this purpose, and he therefore gave me, in the letter I have just communicated, the sensible and well-meant advice respecting the restraint which it was desirable to place on the intentions of the French.

I did not find it so easy, however, to obtain a ready welcome in Vienna, and had to go to work slowly and carefully. Immediately after my return from Paris, I had received the agreeable news that my journey had been well-received at the Foreign Office in Vienna. I therefore instructed Baron Borsch, who was my *Chargé d'Affaires* there,

to intimate personally to Count Buol, how greatly I valued his appreciation of my negotiations in Paris, and altogether the sound Western policy of Austria, and that I should not fail to use my influence in Berlin to the same effect.

Count Buol gratefully received this communication, and begged to be allowed to report on the letter of instruction to my Ambassador to his Majesty the Emperor personally. There was no time to be lost in making use of this favourable moment. I therefore wrote a memorandum for the Emperor of Austria, and gave it, together with a private letter to His Majesty, to Herr von Borsch, who had in the meantime come to Gotha, to take back to Vienna.

Baron von Borsch wrote to me, in a report of the 4th and 5th of April, 'that the Minister had received my communication with many thanks, and with the promise that he would immediately deliver it to the Emperor.'

It must by no means be imagined, however, that in April 1854 there was not also a strong Russian current at the Court of Vienna. Not only from the ambassadors of the German Central States, but also from the high aristocracy of the Imperial capital, the Russian Ambassador met with the very best support. It was said, that M. de Meyendorf would have presented his letters of recall long ago, had he not been so well served in Vienna by the numerous friends of Russia. Count Buol himself complained of the ambassadors of the Central German States, and used to say, that it was impossible to make any communication to them, because, if he had anything to say to them, it was much better to say it direct to the Russian Ambassador.

My own *Chargé d'Affaires* suffered very much from these party movements. He was made to feel, in his social position, that he was the representative of the radical Duke. Nothing is more strongly characteristic of the diplomatic complications with Russia at that time, than the circumstance that this great question was looked upon, in all German States, almost as a home affair. This fact must be well borne in mind, in order to gain a correct idea of the nature and the character of the political contrasts then existing. Since those days,

Europe has frequently seen the Eastern Question rise up again, and discussed, without the inner factions of the various States, or even the body of the nations themselves, being so entirely engrossed by this matter of foreign policy, as they were in 1854.

The moment for direct personal intercourse with the Emperor of Austria, so ardently desired by me, appeared just then not altogether favourable. At the beginning of the month, as Herr von Borsch informed me, Count Buol had chanced to have little opportunity of speaking with the Emperor, and it took some days before he could deliver my memorial. On the 24th of April, the brilliant festivities took place, in connection with the young Emperor's marriage with the fair Bavarian Princess whom he had selected from purest affection.

I was all the more pleased, and took it as a favourable omen, under the circumstances, that the letter with which His Majesty honoured me, bore the date of April the 25th :

‘*MOST ILLUSTRIOUS DUKE*,—I fulfill with pleasure the agreeable duty of thanking Your Highness sincerely for the communication you have so obligingly made to me.

‘In face of the importance of the subject matter, Your Highness’ letter and the enclosed memorandum could not fail to engage my fullest attention. Your Highness is not only placed in a most favourable position as an observer of contemporary history, but your connections have also the advantage of enabling you to fertilise the convictions you gain from your independent point of view.’ Your Highness has given a fresh proof of this, by the influence you have exercised at a critical moment in Paris and Berlin.

‘All the more must I value Your Highness’ letter, in which you so characteristically point out, how urgently the novelty of the present political situation calls for fresh efforts on the part of all friends of the monarchic cause and of law and order. German affairs, in particular, weigh heavily upon my mind at the present crisis.

‘To act in close union with Prussia ; to secure, in common

with this Power, a unanimous and firm attitude on the part of all the German Governments; to strengthen afresh the sense of common political interests in Germany, which has unfortunately been disturbed in so many ways; to invest the acts of the Confederation, in its totality, with dignity and authority: these are the ends I am most ardently striving for, and for the attainment of which I hope, in the interest of all Germany, to have gained a firm and secure basis by my recent negotiations with the King of Prussia.

‘Your Highness will ever find me ready to listen to your views with the same pleasure. Those you have already intimated to me, give me an agreeable guarantee for the manner in which you will in future continue to profit by the favour of your circumstances.

‘I beg Your Highness to accept the assurance of sincere esteem, with which

‘I remain

‘Your Highness’ friendly-disposed

‘FRANCIS JOSEPH.

‘Vienna, April 25, 1854.

‘TO THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS

‘DUKE ERNEST AUGUSTUS OF SAXE-COBURG-GOTHA,

‘OUR DEAR UNCLE AND DUKE.’

What appeared especially noteworthy in the letter of the Emperor of Austria, was his repeated mention of German affairs, the representation of which, according to the declarations of the Minister Count Buol, was to be the chief aim of the policy of the Empire. Meanwhile, the state of affairs in Vienna itself had by no means become more settled. No doubt, after the views of the Emperor had been more definitely expressed, and the April treaties with Prussia were concluded, a portion of the aristocracy gave up its opposition against the Western tendency, and my *Chargé d’Affaires* informed me that friendship for Russia was no longer preached in illustrious circles, like it formerly was. Still, a number of generals adhered firmly to their late companionship in arms with the Russian army, nor did that significant military

trifolium, Radetzky, Jellacic, and Windischgraetz, even now subdue the tone of their fears with regard to the revolutionary ideas of Western Europe.

The nuptials of the Emperor caused a conflux of all the higher officers in the capital, and it was not without some effect on the political situation, when old Radetzky appeared in Vienna, about the middle of April, declaiming very loudly against Count Buol, and holding demonstrative intercourse with the Russian Ambassador, M. de Meyendorf. Even the more highly educated officers, like Schoenhals, Wimpfen, and others, declared themselves warmly for the Russian cause, and the only one who formed an exception in the concert of the military friends of Russia, was Field-Marshal Hess.

The Russians, on their part, managed, with extraordinary dexterity, to further and increase the spirit so favourably disposed to them. The Czar sent Lieutenant-General de Gruenwald, who was very well-known in Vienna, and liked in court circles there, to represent him at the marriage of the Emperor. In order to give a more poetic colouring to the matter, it was reported that, when the grey-headed old soldier came out from his audience with the Emperor, the tears were streaming down his cheeks. From what I knew of the General, this report appeared to me to be quite credible, and very easy to account for.

At what pitch of hesitation and uncertainty all and everything had arrived, in consequence of the movements of Austrian politics, could best be gathered from the fact that it was possible to construe every event from two sides. When the Russians evacuated Little Wallachia, it was done, according to the opinions of the one side, in order to preserve the friendship of Austria, and, in the opinion of the other side, in order to prepare for an attack on the part of Austria. Every movement in the Austrian army received its double comment, and there were always authorities to be found for the one and the other view. The only incident that appeared to disconcert the friends of Russia, was the presence of the Duke of Cambridge in Vienna, who had been distinguished in a rather conspicuous manner during the marriage festivities.

Just as friendly had been the reception accorded by the Emperor to the Duke of Brunswick, nor had the Duke, on his part, neglected to strengthen the Emperor in his sympathies with the Western Powers. It was talked of at Court, that the Archduke Max Ferdinand would shortly return the visit of the Duke of Cambridge in England.

In the meantime, Herr von Borsch reported to me, on the 7th of May, that he had received a letter from Count Buol, in which the latter informed him that the Emperor expected my visit in Vienna towards the 1st of June, when His Majesty intended starting on a journey to Prague, in company with the Empress. In order to be better prepared for my stay in the Austrian capital, I had still to wait for various tidings from Paris and Berlin. Thus a fortnight elapsed before I could reach Vienna, after a wearisome journey along the Danube, *via* Ratisbon, Passow, and Greinburg.

My *Chargé d'Affaires* had been urging me every day not to delay my journey any longer, because, as he said, the moment was so important, and my presence might be of such great consequence. 'Austria,' he was assured by well-informed and competent men, 'was on the point of cutting off the last thread of her connection with Russia, and the orders had already been given to hold the Transylvanian and Galician army corps in readiness to march.'

I remembered, however, the old songs about the Austrian militia in the wars of independence, and confidently expected to arrive before the action had begun, the more so, indeed, as at this moment the moving spirits round the seething cauldron of Viennese diplomacy appeared to be much more intent on dividing the spoils than on conquering them.

Some not uninteresting information was still given me before my arrival by Herr von Borsch, concerning the far reaching plans that were gaining favour in certain Austrian circles, hand in hand, as it were, with the very opposite ideas. My name, too, so my Minister assured me, had been brought into connection with various distributions of territories that were to take place in the East. 'Contrary to the settlements of the Conferences in Vienna,' he wrote, 'the preservation, and

the integrity, of Turkey is suddenly doubted here, and people are forthwith beginning to draw up a new map of Eastern Europe. Austria could then demand that the Danubian Principalities should be governed by quite independent Sovereigns, enjoying the protection of all the Great Powers, by which means alone the wishes expressed with regard to commerce, and freedom of rivers and seas, could be satisfied. Austria can demand that, as long as the Western Powers take a firm footing in the South of Turkey, she shall be allowed to install herself in the North. By occupying Bosnia and the Herzegovina, Austria would strengthen Dalmatia, and acquire a country in its rear which would round off the kingdom and increase its forces on land and at sea, to some extent as England and France had done by occupying those glorious countries of the South.'

The Greek Question was likewise being ventilated in Vienna circles, and as it was assumed that King Otto's position was untenable, Herr von Borsch thought he could assure me, that it was seriously contemplated to offer me the crown which my Royal uncle had declined.

'May it please Your Highness,' my correspondent continued, 'to see by this how public attention is directed towards you. But there is still another political conjecture in which Your Highness is actively concerned. It is believed that England and France see the possibility of re-establishing a Polish Kingdom, as the best bulwark against Russia. If Austria should be inclined to let herself be compensated in the South, the question, here too, would soon arise of calling upon some dynasty to assume the Government, and, in this case also, a branch of the Sovereign House of Saxony, which once ruled there, would have the best chances.'

Although these plans, conjectures, and discussions, which were all to gain more or less practical importance in the course of the next decennaries, produced little impression upon me at the time, still it interested me to know that the Napoleonic idea of achieving great transformations in the States was not so absolutely repudiated in the diplomatic circles of Vienna. It was, after all, remarkable enough, that even the more con-

servative circles in Austria did not shrink from discussing topics which had just been set going by Napoleonic organs like the *Siècle*, or by the scheming mind of M. de Bunsen.

Were discussions of this kind merely confined to the ante-chambers of the ruling sovereigns, or were the persons at the helm themselves on the point of giving free scope to their state-forming fancy? I should no doubt soon be enlightened on the subject.

It was very agreeable to me, on arriving in Vienna, to be able to take up my quarters again, as I had done two years ago, in the Golden Lamb Hotel, which was familiar to me of old, and where I could move with the greatest ease and freedom, and hold intercourse with personages of every variety and description. The Emperor, with his young wife, had taken up his abode for the most part in Laxenburg, and it was there where I was summoned to my first audience with His Majesty.

The exhaustive conversation which I there had the privilege of carrying on with His Majesty, was followed, the same day at dinner, and at our meetings on frequent subsequent occasions, by a series of supplementary discussions, so that I hardly found it necessary to keep to the strict rules of chronology in noting down all the particulars that were entered into with the Emperor.

I found the Emperor greatly changed to his advantage, since I had last seen him. He had grown much stronger, and showed greater ease and determination in his movements. In spite of the troubled state of affairs, and the frostiness of the situation, there was a certain happy animation observable in the vigorous young monarch, and the founding of his domestic happiness appeared to have had the most beneficial effect on his mind. During my intercourse with him, I became more and more confirmed in my conviction that he possessed the talent of governing in an eminent degree, and that he would become of great importance to the old Hapsburg State. A calm and dispassionate view of things seemed combined in His Majesty with firmness and determination in the execution of purposes which he had once resolved upon. He had in-

wardly grown since two years, especially in this latter respect, and had attained his full consciousness of power.

However, frankly and vigorously as he was wont to enter into the discussion of affairs, he yet appeared to have set himself certain bounds, beyond which he was personally not inclined to go. With regard to all details and final decisions, he used to refer me to his Ministers. In this method of treating matters, there manifested itself a tradition of the old Austrian art of government, coupled with natural and personal prudence.

The Emperor met me with unusual heartiness on the occasion of my first reception, and thanked me at once, in friendly terms, for the readiness with which I had responded to his wish to see me there. He enlarged, in well-chosen words, on the necessity of a more intimate intercourse between those persons who stood in close connection with great affairs, and in particular between the German Sovereigns among one another.

Taking the opportunity at once to remark, that in the present anxious time this idea of a close alliance between the German Sovereigns must suggest itself to every mind, I brought the conversation immediately on to the politics of the day.

The Emperor expressed himself without restraint on the subject of Russia. 'In consideration of the great veneration I entertain for the Emperor Nicholas,' he said, 'I feel the need of assuming, to the honour of the Czar, that he has been driven to these many false and almost unworthy steps by a powerful party and by treacherous counsellors. Nothing,' he then continued, 'has given me greater pain, than the thought of waging war against Russia. But it is evident that the Russians did not wish it otherwise.'

On another occasion, when I spoke of the fact that Russian diplomacy was developing uncommon activity at the German Courts, the Emperor replied: 'Oh yes, they first tried it on with us great ones; now they are trying it on with the little ones.' He was very accurately informed as to the intrigues of Russian emissaries in the Slavonic provinces of

Austria, and the idea that the same Russians who had just helped him to suppress the Hungarian revolution, were now at once beginning to exchange loving looks with the malecontents, appeared to have wounded the Emperor to the very core. Besides, remarks of Russian generals and statesmen, on Austria, the army, and the Imperial family itself, had become known to him, and had, for the moment at least, increased his hostile feelings towards Russia in a very considerable degree. It was not easy to imagine a more favourable ground for my view of the whole European situation.

The Emperor's language in reference to these subjects was so outspoken, that he frequently and on various occasions expressed his great regret, that a so wide-spread Russian party existed in Berlin and Vienna. 'In that respect,' he said, 'we are by no means better off in Austria than in Berlin.' In Vienna too, he remarked with a smile, there existed circles of this sort, but they knew well enough here, how little influence their caviling would have on him (the Emperor).

But for all the clearness of his disposition and decisions, the Emperor, as was but natural, was rendered anxious and uneasy by the attitude of Prussia. During one of my first interviews with him, the Emperor said, half jokingly: 'It cannot be denied, after all, that they do very extraordinary things in Berlin. However,' he added, in a consoling tone, 'they will not be able to break the treaty for all that.'

What seemed to render him most uneasy, was the thought that, just at the beginning, he would stand alone in the great action against Russia, with an exposed flank, and an ally who was on friendly terms with the enemy. He said, there was great danger, too, in the circumstance, that the Russian party might mislead the King to take improper steps against France, and that, on the other hand, the Emperor Napoleon might then be provoked to retaliate.

I replied, that I could not recognise such a danger. The King of Prussia shrunk from engaging in war as long as possible, and, under the present circumstances, would be the very last to provoke France. On the other hand, Napoleon was intimately acquainted with the circumstances in Berlin,

and I had made it my task, when on my visit in Paris, to quiet his mind on this score particularly. Very characteristic was the remark of the Emperor, that, as to the substance of the thing, he could no doubt entirely rely on Prussia. He only wished, he said, that he had many such true Austrians in his monarchy as King Frederick William was.

As to Louis Napoleon, it was not easy for me to gain a clear idea of the personal opinions of the Emperor of Austria, and it took some time before I heard him express more decided views on this subject.

The Emperor always evinced himself very grateful and full of interest for my accounts of the French Court, but, as the opinions of his surroundings appeared to be very divided, I had need of a certain caution in touching upon the wishes expressly communicated to me by Napoleon.

Only when the Emperor once assured me, that he was extremely pleased to find that I took a more favourable view of Louis Napoleon than he was generally accustomed to hear, did I think the opportunity come, to give expression to the wider ideas of the French Emperor. 'I have always been of the opinion that Napoleon's intentions are honest,' the Emperor said. 'I am convinced that he can be relied upon, and I am extremely glad to find my good opinions confirmed by what you have told me.'

Under these circumstances, I thought I ought no longer to put off representing to the Emperor the Napoleonic ideas concerning the future rectification of the European map, as being something that might one day obtain actual significance. I could speak of these things with all the more ease, as I myself was in no way interested, and could take it for granted that the Emperor had, by this time, become sufficiently well acquainted with me, to know how little cause I had given for all the rumours and combinations which had connected my name with various kinds of State projects.

The Emperor Francis Joseph seemed to have, generally, a pretty fair knowledge of the French projects, but he apparently placed little faith in the utterances of the *Siècle* and other newspapers. I thought it well to confirm this view, with

regard to the great transformations that were in question, but without, therefore, being able to conceal the full seriousness of two points, which Napoleon wished the Emperor of Austria to take into consideration.

That the war should end in a great Peace Congress, which would, formally at least, deprive the Congress of Vienna of its international title, was an idea which Napoleon desired to have discussed with the greatest frankness; nor did he wish to have any secret made of his hopes regarding the territorial compensation of France, who was not inclined to carry on the war merely *pour les beaux yeux* of the Sultan.

I could assure him, with regard to this latter point, that I was far from entertaining any personal opinion in the matter, the more so, as the so-called disinterestedness of the war was looked upon as of the utmost importance in England, and as my brother, in particular, fanatically upheld this point of view. But, after all, I had to point out that Napoleon was rather awkwardly situated towards the French nation, which neither took, nor could take, any pleasure in a so totally fruitless Eastern war.

As the Emperor permitted me to say, whether—apart from all dreams of the future—Napoleon really had any substantial aims in view, and what they were, I gave him a *résumé* of the conversations I had had with him, touching the development of Austria in the East. I told him that Napoleon looked upon Austria's acquisition of the Danubian Principalities as quite a matter of course; that he would leave the Austrian Government free to act as it liked in regard to Servia; and that he was convinced that the possession of Bosnia, on the part of the Austrian Empire, was, after all, merely a question of time.

Although the Emperor raised the objection, that all these countries were unproductive, and would cost the State more than they brought in, still he did not exactly decline to discuss the matter, and I was able to reply, that Napoleon believed Milan to be a much greater difficulty for Austria, than those Eastern provinces, and that, according to him, it was not likely that Italy would ever be pacified.

The Emperor appeared to become very uneasy at this

information, and most strongly repudiated any idea of relinquishing Italian territory. I gained, at that moment, the firm conviction that all Napoleon's expectations of attaining his desired end by means of conventions, treaties, and compensations, were purely chimerical, nor could I conceal this fact afterwards from the Emperor of the French. It had the effect, that Napoleon still consoled himself, for a time, with the idea that circumstances would prove the stronger, and that Austria, when she had once engaged in the action of war, would also experience its consequences. But afterwards, when Austria's participation in the war against Russia ended in vapour, as events will show, his interest in the Eastern war cooled with increasing rapidity.

With regard to all the details of the political and military operations, the Emperor Francis Joseph had referred me to Count Buol, and Field-Marshal Hess, and I saw a great deal of these two men, who treated me with the greatest confidence.

The relations which were established between me and Count Buol, were, from this time forth, of a very peculiar kind. The more this cautious diplomatist was at first alarmed by my appearance in Vienna, the more confidential he afterwards became, in the correspondence which he entered into with me. Count Buol was a man of character, reliable, and of very conservative and sober opinions, without any personal pretensions, but also far from possessing any political initiative.

Like the Emperor Francis Joseph himself, he had been driven out of his former range of ideas, chiefly by the exciting policy of the Russians, and was, in consequence, all the more angry at having had his pretty circles so frivolously destroyed. Now, however, he was determined to break the bonds with which Austria had only too long been burdened. He spoke very kindly and frankly with me, but evaded, just as anxiously, all questions of public law, and became, at first, the more reserved, the more energetically I tried to push forward.

The Earl of Westmoreland, who was an old acquaintance of mine, told me, the Minister had said to him, that it had after all done his heart good to hear a German Sovereign speak in that way; 'but,' added my English friend, 'Buol tells me you

had the devil in you.' In the latter days of my stay in Vienna, Count Buol threw off his shy reserve, and grew more and more confidential. He finally asked to be allowed to write to me direct, and I promised him every assistance, in the action against Russia, towards bringing the German Confederation over to Austria's side.

In the hope that Prussia and the German Confederation would, after all, not decline to co-operate with Austria, the deliberations on the mustering of troops, the plans of war, and the posts of command, which had been held by order of the Emperor, both before and during the time of my stay, were already pretty far advanced. In settling these matters, the opinion had gained favour that, in virtue of my political bearing, I too should be fitted for an important post of command in the combined army corps. I was, in consequence, to some extent informed by Field-Marshal Hess of the military plans of operation, and, from the experiences I gained in this respect, I drew a picture at the time, which will probably serve better than anything else to illustrate the situation.

How Austria intends to carry on the war, I am able to conclude from various allusions made in our conversations, and from the facts already before me. The Austrian troops are now being concentrated in two directions. (1.) The cavalry is proceeding from the German provinces, the infantry and artillery from Bohemia and Moravia, to Galicia. (2.) The army of the Archduke Albrecht, which is already mobilised, is marching from the Danube to Grosswardein. It is doubtful whether it is to advance to the Bukovina, or towards the passes of Bistritz. The Galician army, which is forming, may be estimated at about 150,000 men, including a force of cavalry amounting to 30,000 horse. The army of the Archduke Albrecht at 110,000. Since, on the other hand, the troops which are to be concentrated in Transylvania amount to scarcely more than 30,000 men, it appears to be certain that the Austrians do not intend to strike a decisive blow in Wallachia. Such a blow will, however, no doubt be struck in the direction of Jassy or Kiew.

Whether the operations of the Galician army will be

defensive or offensive, will probably depend most on the action of Prussia. On the whole, the Austrian army is looked upon in Vienna as the right wing, the Prussian as the left, and it is desired that the Confederate troops should commence operations at the centre, in the neighbourhood of Cracow. It is hoped that the Confederation will furnish half the contingent for this war, and will consequently enter into action in two corps of over 30,000 men each. These two corps are to be formed out of the Bavarian, and the three mixed, army corps. Each of these four army corps would become a division of about 15,000 men. The corps comprising the 7th and 8th army corps would operate jointly with the Austrian army, and the corps formed out of 9th and 10th Confederate army corps jointly with the Prussian army. Both corps, in the opinion of the Emperor and General von Hess, would have Austrian and Prussian troops attached to them, according to desire and requirement, in order to give them a firmer support.

From a remark of the Emperor, I should conclude that he himself will assume the chief command of his army. It is desired that the Prince of Prussia should take the command of the Prussian army. As regards the Confederate corps, it will be endeavoured to give the command of the one corps to Prince Charles of Bavaria, that of the other to me.

Field-Marshal von Hess not only belonged to the most refined and able officers of the army, but was also in a political respect a clear-sighted and unbiassed man, with whom it was possible to discuss matters easily and frankly. It did one's heart good to see the youthful enthusiasm with which the old man had set about his task, and the confidence of victory with which he was organising the great war against Russia. In a letter which I received from the worthy General, soon after my departure from Vienna, and in which he again repeated what he had already told me verbally, he adverted in a more direct manner to my post of command.

With the public, Hess was excessively popular at the time of my stay in Vienna. I had a good deal of instructive intercourse, both with higher officials who knew, and in great part shared, the feeling in liberal circles, and with eminent repre-

sentatives of the Press, like Kuranda, who, in his *Ostdeutsche Post*, advocated Buol's views. An important position was occupied by the *Lloyd*, whose impassioned articles against Russia, mostly from the pen of Warrens, caused a great sensation, both in Vienna, and all over Germany. The attitude of the Austrian Press in those years reconquered, in a very remarkable way, many lost sympathies for the monarchy and the Imperial dynasty; and what had long been considered a sheer impossibility, that Austria would once more gain the start of Prussia in the public opinion of Germany, was one of the most extraordinary consequences of these diplomatic complications.

However, when I looked around me in the circles of the nobility, I must confess that I could never quite rid myself of the fear, that all this anti-Russian enthusiasm might here too prove to be nothing more than a straw-fire. In the drawing-rooms of Count Ficquelmont and the Princes Lichtenstein and Schwarzenberg, the old hatred against France, and particularly against England, was fostered, and Russia still extolled as the safeguard of law and order, and of feudal government, which latter was the chief consideration in these circles. It was curious enough, that even Lord Westmoreland, who had become rather obtuse on the whole, did not, as the representative of England, oppose these goings on, but rather laid himself open to the suspicion of being a secret friend of Russia. Only the French Ambassador, Baron Bourqueney, made a laudable exception in the chorus of busy diplomatists, by calmly, indulgently, and courteously, but with firmness and a frank representation of the dangers which such a system of illusions was sure to bring about, taking the field against these Russian influences.

Curious was the position which Minister von Bach occupied, in the midst of these conflicting tendencies of Vienna society. I knew him already too well, not to have endeavoured to converse with him as much as possible. It was to his communications that I really owed the key to Austria's wheeling round against Russia. Bach told me that, already at the time when the great inner plans of organising a uniform

monarchy had been conceived, he had prepared the Emperor for a rupture, which at no far distant date was sure to ensue with Russia. It was nothing but a result of inner reforms, he said, that now enabled Austria to raise such an army, nor did he give up the hope of still seeing the finances regulated and brought to unexpected prosperity by means of the new national loan.

He promised himself a great deal from a close alliance with Germany, and, altogether, showed himself, now again, as one of the few who had some conception of the affairs of Germany. That Austria's approach to the West must give the Empire a tremendous start in its home and foreign relations, and win, or at least materially improve, the sympathies of Germany, this the shrewd Minister knew very well. If, nevertheless, he was not without great distrust regarding France, the reason of this lay in his correct view of the Napoleonic ideas. He gave himself up to no illusions on the Italian question, but he was either conscious that no settlement was possible here, or he had no mind to admit of any. He expounded the facts, however, excellently. He referred particularly to the attacks of the Piedmontese Press, and declared that the more indulgence Austria showed, the more she was attacked.

No doubt, Bach observed, nothing was feared in Italy. Austria had a good position and a good army. Yet the state of affairs was unbearable. France was to blame for it. Napoleon only needed to speak a word, and this state of things would be changed immediately. But the Emperor of France was *forced* to act thus and not otherwise, and he could and would never give up the idea of an aggrandisement in Italy. Austria, however, would never separate with one of her provinces.

This 'Never' of the Minister appeared to me to be, at the same time, an answer to the proposals which I had made to the Emperor himself, at Napoleon's desire; hence I thought it well to drop this topic in all further conversations.

To the most interesting reminiscences of my stay in Vienna belongs my visit to the aged Chancellor of the ante-

revolutionary period, Prince Metternich, who lived a life of retirement in his beautiful villa on the Rennweg. He appeared to have little influence, and received the numerous visits paid him by strangers, with the kindness and pleasure of a private man, without troubling to enquire whether his views accorded with the prevailing tendencies of the Government, or not.

The part he took in current affairs, was over-estimated in the rest of Europe, and my uncle himself, who had remained in uninterrupted correspondence with Metternich, never let an opportunity pass without giving good advice, which no doubt vanished unused into the letter-book of the aged Chancellor. However, it is certain that I owed it chiefly to the active and friendly intercourse which was still kept up between King Leopold and Metternich, that I was received by the latter with the most easy familiarity, as if I had always belonged to his most faithful adherents.

I had not spoken very long, when he seized the opportunity of expounding to me his extremely philosophic method of viewing the general state of the world's affairs, in an academic lecture which contained many sayings of a rich and experienced mind. He enlarged upon the history of every possible alliance that had been concluded, since the time of the Emperor Joseph II, for and against Turkey, and then observed, that he must regard the one desired at the present moment as something entirely novel, as a combination, in fact, that had no precedent, and the consequences of which it was therefore impossible to judge of. He said that, in view of Russia's plans, a European coalition was much to be recommended, but whether it would answer, was another question.

He had, in general, little good to say about Russia. The Emperor Nicholas he called a politician of petty means, who had always been bent on playing the prompter to all Europe. It was this that had so greatly incensed the Germans, especially against the old alliance, which, inasmuch as it secured peace, had been a great blessing for Europe. The Emperor Nicholas should cease to play this part of the

prompter: the feeling in Germany would then become pacified again.

Metternich discussed German affairs with a sort of forbearance towards myself, for, though he pretended, from an objective point of view, to see no means of satisfying the national feeling, still he declared to me, that he was very well able to understand the sentiments that had prevailed in Germany for so long, and that he himself would no doubt once have been capable of feeling thoroughly German, had he not preferred to become Austrian Chancellor.

Very neat was a remark of the old statesman on the difference between ordinary old age and great age in the full sense of the term, of both of which he had now had abundant experience. He had found the former, he said, very oppressive and wearisome, but the latter ultimately agreeable and pleasant. 'An old man,' he added, 'when he passes the flowers in the garden, only sees their decay, whilst the very old man still finds pleasure in the withering flower, and beholds in decay merely the power of regeneration.'

'Whilst in old age,' he continued, 'all duties weigh more heavily on a man, and the tasks of life, which he still thinks it impossible to dispense with, are more than ever difficult to fulfil, the modest pretensions of hoary old age afford an undreamed of source of life's little pleasures and simple enjoyments.'

And, indeed, one had the sensation, as if something of the beautiful ease and comfort of this hoary existence communicated itself to his surroundings, and I could have listened to Metternich for a long time, whilst he expounded his views of the world, which he had led so long, and which loved him so little. He was now, as it were, reconciled to all conflicting tendencies, hence his great age afforded him the privilege of calling up a pleasant image of the past also in the minds of those, who, like myself, had learnt, from their earliest childhood, rather to fear him than to love him.

As I had every reason to place full faith in his assurance that he was not listened to at all, or, at any rate, very rarely, I was consequently not able to expect any assistance from him in furthering the details of political affairs.

However, in the last days of my stay in Vienna, I was in the latter respect still to be rather rudely startled out of all my dreams of ultimate success. I knew that every effort was being made in Berlin to extinguish, in good time, the fiery spirit of war which prevailed in Vienna; when I suddenly learnt that Colonel von Manteuffel had arrived in Vienna with important letters from the Queen to the Archduchess Sophia. In addition to this, I had just received the following letter from my brother, who did not draw a more favourable picture of the situation :

‘In order to be sure of your receiving my letter, I am sending it direct to Vienna. I received yours last night, and as you intend leaving on the 19th, my answer would hardly have reached you in time. I have communicated its contents to Lord Clarendon. The Russian faction in Berlin has now entirely gained the day, and turned every good German and Prussian out of office. Whether Manteuffel will take alarm at the consequences of these events, remains to be seen.

Nevertheless, I believe Austria has nothing to fear from Prussia, and could confidently continue on her forward course. That they are still loath to believe in Vienna that the Western Powers are earnestly resolved on war, is intelligible to me, for the Russians take advantage of every circumstance to foster this idea on the part of the German Powers. In France the war is really not popular Here it is just the reverse. The English are incredibly eager for war against a Power, whose form of Government, and whose foreign policy, they abhor. The opposition, which desires to keep on the popular side, has no weapons against the Ministry, except to run it down as being luke-warm in respect of the war, and to cast suspicion on Lord Aberdeen especially, who is the only one who keeps the coalition together.

‘The Russians, therefore, by simply letting our newspaper articles appear in the German Press, have no difficulty in making the continental public believe that the Government is not earnestly resolved on war. The fact that *new* taxes to the amount of ten millions have been imposed, is a proof of our earnest. This represents 120,000,000 florins, which are

raised annually. It is not a loan, like in Prussia and France, but is to be raised annually, as long as the war lasts.

‘Our difficulty is our prosperity; we cannot get any soldiers, sailors, and ships. So enormous is the progress of our commerce, industry, and emigration. We are fearfully busy building ships; but are immediately out of stock again. We have 40,000 sailors in America alone, 10,000 in Australia, etc. The war will not be a rapid one, unless the German Powers join. But the longest purse will carry the victory in a long struggle, whatever the numerical strength of the army may be in the beginning. We have already captured fifty vessels, and destroyed twelve at Odessa. Russia is not to be conquered, but can be blown up financially, to which end the one-and-a-half million troops which she brings into the field, contribute most usefully. If we could only get hold of Sebastopol. The Greek episode is abominable, and shows that Russia plays the revolutionist too, when it suits her purpose. Now good-bye.

‘BUCKINGHAM PALACE, *May* 16, 1854.’

Meanwhile, Colonel von Manteuffel was making strenuous efforts in Vienna to secure a fresh start for his party and cause. It was most curious to observe how, from the moment this favourite of all ladies appeared at the Austrian Court, everything, even the sun and the moon, seemed obscured. An air of coolness was perceptible in circles where I had but just found the warmest zeal for the good cause, and even the Emperor himself had become quieter and almost taciturn. Without his telling me anything about the latest accounts from Berlin, I comprehended very well what it signified, when he casually remarked: ‘After all, the King of Prussia will scarcely mobilise his army.’ Notwithstanding, I still retained the impression that the chivalrous Emperor was personally by no means shaken at heart, but only seemed to waver.

At my parting audience with him, he thanked me, as he had done on my arrival, most cordially for my zeal and for the services I had rendered to the good cause. He concluded

by expressing his wish to see me there again very soon. When I replied that this would not be possible for the present, he said with a certain hearty emotion : ' Well, then, I reckon upon meeting you again in the great action.

Considering the news which Colonel von Manteuffel would presumably take back with him from Vienna, it was now my intention to get the start of him with King Frederick William IV, so I resolved to travel as quickly as possible straight to Berlin, without touching home first.

I might then yet hope, by a truthful description of the situation in Vienna, to produce some impression on the King ; whereas it was only too certain that a personage like Colonel Manteuffel must have had, both at Court and in the higher society of the Imperial capital, abundant material afforded him for a brilliant representation of the reverse of the medal. He would then find it easy enough, by concealing the personal intentions of the Emperor Francis Joseph, to determine the King to proceed still further on his backward course.

It therefore appeared important to me to make my report to the King, before Colonel von Manteuffel made his. But the same reasoning had also occurred to the other party, and so it happened that Manteuffel actually got the start of me by one train, and had already skilfully managed to trouble the political waters in Berlin, when I arrived there.

However, since the King, on my arrival being announced to him, at once summoned me to an audience in SANSSOUCI, I already fancied that everything could still be saved. But this was to prove a delusion, and though I had already seen many extraordinary things in my life, one of the most remarkable experiences now awaited me.

When I reached the ante-chamber of the King, I was somewhat surprised to find myself kept waiting rather long, which was contrary to the usual habit of the King. At last the doors opened, and the King appeared, in the best of humours, leaning on the arm of the Queen, who greeted me in the most friendly way. He was extremely communicative, and the Queen, as she said, was curious to hear how I had found the newly married Imperial couple, to whom she was

related, and how her sister, the Archduchess Sophia, had borne the fatigues of the marriage festivities. Politics were not touched upon; whereas at dinner, which soon followed, all the most famous friends of Russia sat round the table, and talked politics after their own fashion.

I described my situation, at the time, in a letter to my brother as follows:

‘Although I had verbal messages to the King from the Emperor of Austria, the Queen and the Russian party skilfully contrived to prevent my speaking with him in private, in spite of his having invited me to do so. Our bitterest opponents, and the members of the Russian Embassy, had been invited to the Royal table, whilst the few persons with whom I am on friendly terms, were nearly all absent. Politics were discussed purposely at table, and the Emperor of Russia and the policy of peace shown up in a rosy light, whilst disdainful mention was made of the Western Powers, and lies were told to the King about the feeling in the country. I did not enter into politics with a single word, and instead of pretending to be vexed or offended, which was, after all, the sole object in view, I could not help giving way to unfeigned mirth, for the whole affair was extremely comical.

‘After coffee, which was served on the terrace, the King at last took me aside, and asked me about the state of political affairs in Vienna. But, hardly a few minutes had elapsed, when the Court-Marshal, Count Keller, came to make a report to the King, and, directly afterwards, it was General von Gerlach who managed to excite the attention of the King. At last, the Queen herself got up, approached the King and said: “Don’t let us plague the poor Duke with these horrid politics, as he is sure to be tired from his long journey, and will be glad to get back to Berlin.” The King rose at once, and quickly took leave of me.’

Whilst I was waiting at the station in Potsdam for the train to start, Alexander von Humboldt came after me, and said that the King had ordered him to accompany me to Berlin, and give me an account of the position of affairs. I need not say that this account was spiced with occasional

remarks on the part of my informant, which were not exactly in harmony with the views of the Berlin Cabinet. But the best was, that the King desired me to speak with Minister von Manteuffel. On the following day, therefore, I had a conversation with Manteuffel, which I at once noted down, and can insert here without any further comment.

The Minister first gave vent to his curiosity as to the real military position of Austria, and the seriousness of the measures that were being taken there. I gave him a truthful account of my experiences in Vienna on that score. He pretended that the Russians under-estimated Austria's power, and spoke here of dictating peace before the gates of Vienna. They would try to take Silistria, but would not go beyond the Balkan. The Russian party here had the upperhand. The King was in a depressed frame of mind, but extremely pacific. In any case, he would not leave Austria in the lurch. The King desired that the separate States should join the alliance. He, Manteuffel, encouraged him in this view, and had, in consequence, incurred a great deal of enmity. The conference of Bamberg was entirely in favour of Russia, and the debates in the German Diet would afford the picture of a Polish parliament.

He assured me that he would support Austria there in every way, and complained bitterly of Bavaria and Saxony.

I remarked hereupon, that the behaviour of these Governments was only encouraged by the events in Berlin; that the sympathies of the German nation went, neither with the small Kings, nor with Prussia; and that Prussia's most faithful adherents, amongst whom I numbered myself, stood deserted and betrayed through the machinations of the *Kreuzzeitung* party; that Austria managed skilfully to make use of this circumstance, and was indirectly already drawing the greatest advantage from it.

He stated further that the Russian party had announced to the Prussian Government, in a Note which Budberg had delivered, that it was the intention of the Emperor Napoleon to send a corps by water to Holstein, in order to threaten Berlin in the rear.

To this I gave a decided denial, but expressed the opinion that France was tired of asking and waiting so long; that she would undertake nothing, however, without her faithful allies, England and Austria; nor would such a threat, if it were to be made, have anything but fatal consequences in every direction.

In this he admitted that I was right. He asked me if I intended to speak with the King again on the state of affairs, to which I replied very decidedly in the negative, as I could not anticipate any result whatsoever by doing so. But I should not evade a conversation, if the King himself desired it.

He finally told me that the Russian party was now triumphing, and that its insolence was almost beyond endurance. I could only laugh at this. We separated like friends who are of the same opinion.

Whoever desired, as a non-Prussian German, to remain the friend of Prussia, to receive credit as such, and not to resign all his trust in that Power, now came to look upon himself more and more as a sort of voluntary martyr. I sent my brother an account of my experiences in Vienna and Berlin, and the echo from London sounded as usual like the chorus of the antique tragedy:

‘I have not found time until to-day,’ my brother wrote, on the 12th of June, from Buckingham Palace, ‘to answer your kind letter of the 3rd inst. from Berlin. The description you give of the state of affairs in Vienna is encouraging, and has given old Westmoreland particularly great satisfaction, because it accords with his own often repeated, and often doubted, assurances. Unfortunately, your accounts from Berlin, too, agree with our own, and show a terrible state of affairs. The King has written an extraordinary letter to Victoria, which is sixteen pages long, and in which he accuses Bunsen, Bonin, and . . . of all possible crimes against their Sovereign—down to the tricoloured shirt-buttons which Bunsen wore in 1848, and the infatuation which caused him, at that time, to mistake the stinking Frankfort crown for the crown of Charles the Great.

‘Over and above this, he expresses himself deeply hurt at being unjustly reproached and abused for pursuing a vacillating policy, whereas he considers his policy a strictly consistent one. We entirely overlook, he says, the “enormous advantage,” we gain from his not having let the French carry the Turkish war beyond their own frontier, which he has merely done out of love of peace, because Russia is in the wrong, and out of friendship for England. Victoria’s answer had tried to make it plain, that, the more consistently the King acted, and the more consistently he carried out a policy which was based on a contradiction, the more contradictory would his actions necessarily be. It was, after all, an unheard of contradiction, to bear France a grudge, because Russia did wrong.

‘In spite of all this, we are still rendered uneasy by the meeting in Tetschen, for there is no mistaking the intention, on so many sides, to build up a bridge for Russia, over which she may beat a retreat, and which is then to be taken to pieces before our very nose; whereas, when Russia has reached the other side, the way is to be paved for her to unite with Prussia and Austria. The Bavarian proposals in Bamberg are incredible. As the purpose of the alliance, they hold up to England the maintenance of King Otto on the throne of Greece, and the closure of the Dardanelles. The defectiveness of the German constitutions shows itself again very plainly. . . .

‘Two divisions of ours are now in Varna. The French, on the other hand, hesitate, on account of their imperfect preparations. The distance, you see, makes everything extremely difficult.’

I may be permitted here to draw, in a few words, the sum total of the experiences I gathered in Vienna and Berlin in the month of May.

The difference between the relations of the two Powers to Russia lay chiefly in the fact, that Prussia was altogether determined to spare the Emperor Nicholas, whereas Austria seemed particularly bent on hurting him. Whilst Frederick William desired, as my brother said, to see ‘golden bridges’ built up for his brother-in-law, Austria’s policy showed, that

she had no clear idea as to the objects to be attained in a war which she desired, and that she was afraid of her own deeds and enterprises. She wanted to see Russia humiliated, but wanted to do nothing which could be followed by such consequences.

In my discussions in Vienna, I had, in more than one quarter, quite apart from Napoleon's commissions, adverted to the necessity of Austria's acquiring the Danubian Principalities, or Bosnia, and I vindicated this idea in all directions. But the utmost that Bach, who still appeared to be the most courageous of all, would admit, was the expectation that Austria, after a successful war, would have to assume the protectorate which Russia now occupied. Otherwise, the restitution of these countries to Turkey was advocated.

There was just as little firmness with regard to the question, whether a definite weakening of Russia ought to be effected. I was at that time much inclined to view the tendencies of the Austrian statesmen in as favourable a light as possible. Still, I thought I could only give an uncertain answer on this subject, in the memorandum which I drew up for my friends. The general impression which my conversations in Vienna produced in me, was, that no one knew what was to be done with Poland. Austria would have liked to deliver Poland from the hands of Russia, but she feared the establishment of such a State just as much.

There could be the less idea of a political advance towards a fixed end, as the Minister who was best qualified to serve the Emperor with talent and ability, Bach, shrank from any responsibility that might arise through a discussion of great European questions. In face of the hatred with which the most important man in the Government was pursued by the Conservative parties, any energetic step might result in the immediate overthrow of the Minister. Characteristic of this situation was a remark of Count Orloff's about the two anti-Russian counsellors of the Emperor, which was passed with great relish from mouth to mouth in the drawing-rooms of the nobility. He had called, as Herr von Borsch wrote to me, Count Buol *une cruche*, and Bach *tout bonnement une canaille*.

A time now came, when the situation changed constantly, from one day to the next, in the most extraordinary manner. Everything seemed calculated to drive speculation on all European Stock Exchanges to a pitch such as it had never been known to reach before.

In an often published despatch to Count Esterhazy in Petersburg, dated June 3, the Austrian Cabinet demanded, on the part of Russia, the unconditional evacuation of the Danubian Principalities, and Herr von Manteuffel supported this ultimatum by a despatch to Baron Werthern of June 12. The answers, which came at last from Count Nesselrode, were at first evasive, and still started from the assumption that the position of the two German Powers towards Russia was chiefly that of friendly intervention.

The confusion was all the greater, as Austria had, in the meantime, also concluded a treaty with the Porte, in which she bound herself to enforce the evacuation of the Danubian Principalities, if need be, by dint of arms. Turkey conferred, in that case, all her sovereign rights on Austria, in return for which the latter guaranteed the integrity of Turkey in so positive a form, that it might well be asked, indeed, what object Austria, and above all Prussia, could have in plunging into a great war with Russia, merely for the sake of prolonging all the evils of Turkish dominion.

Prussia now protested against the treaty with the Porte; Austria pleaded the treaty of April: Manteuffel sent Count Alvensleben to Vienna; and Gortschakoff took the place of Count Meyendorf. Gortschakoff was to bring about a rupture in Vienna, and Count Alvensleben to prevent Austria from marching her forces into the Danubian Principalities. The King of Prussia declared himself released from all his obligations to take part in the war, whilst General Hess was daily expecting orders to set out from Bukovina and attack Russia in Moldavia.

Prussia's renewed attempts to intervene were firmly rejected by the Western Powers, and, in the midst of the general confusion, Count Buol drew up a stipulation embodying four

points.* In all the negotiations that followed, these points remained the sole, though much riddled, standard, around which the European diplomatists, who were now cast helplessly adrift, at times grouped themselves, only too soon to separate again in all directions.

These four points were a sort of diplomatic magic wand, by means of which the friends and the enemies of Russia might be united in happy concord. In the course of the ensuing months, indeed, these four points even found an occasional encomiast in the King of Prussia himself, whose Cabinet, conscientious in the art of interpretation, carefully watched whether they were really strictly kept to in despatches or notes, or were here and there perhaps exceeded.

Russia at first simply rejected the four points, but she evacuated, from strategic considerations, the Danubian Principalities, which were soon after occupied by the Austrians. Napoleon subsequently asserted that, whilst Austria had assured the Western Powers that she was occupying the Danubian Principalities in order to keep the Russians out of them, she had at the same time told Russia that she was doing so in order to leave the Russian Army free to operate against the allied Powers. The Emperor of France, who made this communication to my brother, pretended to have been informed of the fact by Russia herself.

Granted the truth of Napoleon's assertion, which I can neither confirm nor refute, it would have to be assumed that Austria, in view of the impossibility of coming to an understanding with Prussia, had only recently become inspired with the wish to postpone her warlike measures, and had thus been induced to make a declaration of the kind to Russia. As for us in Germany, there appeared to be no reason for doubting the honesty of Austria's proceeding. The summons of the

* These points, as is well known, stated the lowest measure of the guarantees that were to be asked for, the right being reserved of making further demands: 1. European guarantee of the rights of the Danubian Principalities. 2. Free navigation at the mouth of the Danube. 3. Revision of the Treaty of 1841 in the interest of the European equilibrium, and with a view to restricting the Power of Russia in the Black Sea. 4. Furtherance of the emancipation of the Christians on the part of all the Powers together, in so far as this was compatible with the sovereign rights of the Sultan, and in such wise that Russia resigned her claims to a special protectorship.

Great Powers to get ready for war, was daily expected by the German Diet, but meanwhile the Confederate States had not even declared their intention of joining the alliance between Austria and Prussia; though they had not declined to do so at the Conference of Bamberg.

Matters remained in this uncertain state, until the middle of November, when Austria once more called upon Prussia to declare her intentions in a more positive manner. This was after Count Nesselrode, in a note of the 6th of November, had given an unfriendly, and not very delicately worded, response to Austria's proposal for peace. On the 20th, an additional clause in the treaty of the 20th of April was agreed upon between Prussia and Austria, and the joint carrying through of the 'four points' by the two Powers was declared to be the object of their alliance.

But the short intimacy between Prussia and Austria, to which the treaty of November still bore testimony, was soon destroyed again, and the relations between the two Courts became very strained. The cause of this was, that, at the time when the above-mentioned additional clause in the treaty of April was being agreed upon, Austria was negotiating with the Western Powers, in the greatest secrecy, a regular league offensive and defensive, which was concluded on the 2nd of December, 1854. When a few days later the world was informed of this astonishing fact, the greatest resentment was felt in Berlin; nor did the King—and, it may be said, with good cause—ever get over this proceeding of the Vienna Cabinet.

In the management of diplomatic affairs in those years, misunderstandings, and surprises of the most extraordinary description, were a matter of every day occurrence. A decided plan, or a plain intention, was nowhere to be found, and mutual suspicion of ill-will reigned supreme. It would take too long to relate how painfully this state of things affected all those who were still striving to bring about a united action on the part of Germany, against the greatest national enemy she then possessed. According to reliable accounts which I received from Berlin, all sorts of efforts had been made there to arouse the King's suspicions also with regard to the tendencies of my

own humble person, and I therefore resolved, when the confusion had reached its highest point, to state my views, both to the Prince of Prussia and to the King himself, in the most out-spoken language I could command.

A short time afterwards, I received detailed answers, both from the King and from the Prince, which, as may easily be seen, were written quite independently of one another, and may consequently be looked upon as two historical sources of the first order with regard to the situation in Berlin at the end of January. The King wrote:

‘CHARLOTTENBURG, *January 27th*, 1855.

‘DEAREST DUKE,—I bless the lines you entrusted to Herr von Freskow. Yes, my Lord Duke, there are many powers endeavouring to cast suspicion on the actions of Your Highness. Thus I was assured, on many sides, that it had been your influence, dearest Duke, that had caused the Thuringian vote to incline so positively towards the Austrian side: but all this is no excuse for the unfriendly words that have reached Gotha from my Foreign Office. Minister von Manteuffel has just left me. If I was dismayed on hearing of an affair of which *I knew nothing*, he was dismayed, because he had never *told me a word* of the matter! The correctness of the remark once made by King John, “that my Government consisted of a series of misunderstandings,” is again confirmed in this case.

* * * * *

‘Your Highness mentions Usedom’s mission. My Adjutant-General, Lieutenant-General von Wedell (Governor of Luxembourg), is going on a similar mission to Paris. The question is, whether their orders correspond with your wishes.

‘On my part they are plain, true, and honest, the more so, as I neither understand, nor do I like, tricky negotiations. I have represented to both Courts, in the plainest terms, how far I *can* and *may* go, and I know that will give satisfaction neither in London nor in Paris. I am sorry for it, but beyond

the limits where I must necessarily become a scoundrel, I am firmly resolved not to go. I consider it most dishonourable to let myself be prevailed upon to thrash one man, because another threatens to thrash me. I rather show my teeth at him who threatens me. A man of honour does not refuse a necessary duel, though he may know that his opponent is a ten times better shot, or better fencer, than he is.

‘I desire most urgently, that there should be no illusion in London or Paris with regard to this incontestable truth. To start from any other basis, would be reckoning without the host. And the host *questionis* is neither the Sovereign of Bueckeberg nor of Vadutz. After being so impudently deceived by Austria (November 28th and December 2nd, 1854) I shall NO LONGER treat with that Power. The lesson was too STRONG! But I propose that the Western Powers should conclude with me, as they have concluded with Austria—of course—due consideration being paid to the difference of our positions. I offer to place myself, by treaty, *entirely* on the side of the Western Powers, as I have done throughout the whole of the year 1854. I will muster a considerable force along the Russian frontier. But I make it a strict condition that I shall not be bound to any sort of offensive co-operation, unless (1.) the *casus foederis* with Austria (April 20th, and second additional clause)—to which all Germany has assented—should occur, or (2.) Russia’s behaviour towards Prussia should render it necessary. By Prussia’s thus joining the league, Austria would obtain freedom for offensive action, which is a sheer *impossibility*, unless Prussia does join.

‘Consider this incontestable truth, and the real and very great advantage contained in this circumstance, and in that of the withdrawal of perhaps 200,000 men that Russia must recall from the real seat of the war, in order to confront us. In return for these very essential advantages, I demand from the Western Powers the solemn guarantee: 1. that Poland shall not be restored by revolutionary means; 2. that no French troops shall pass through the territory of the German Confederation (exclusive of Austrian territory). Matters stood thus on my side, when I received the tidings that *the nice*

Triple Alliance was resolved not to allow Prussia to participate in the negotiations for peace in Vienna. THAT ALTERS EVERYTHING. That touches Prussia's honour, position, and credit. *Point d'argent, point de Suisses*. No participation at the Peace Congress, no treaty with Prussia. That is settled, my Lord Duke.

'We shall see, in a few days, whether the Western Powers will carry through this piece of illegality. I shall then declare myself exempt from all the engagements which I entered into on the 9th of April, as a member of the Conference of Vienna, and—God in Heaven knows—which I have truly and honestly carried out. My firm language in favour of the four points caused a momentary impression in St Petersburg, which made me fear for the safety of my Baltic sea-board, and for *the time* when the allies would be obliged to abandon that horrid sea.

'Notwithstanding, I did not let myself be prevented from flatly refusing three proposals which I considered incompatible with the duties I had undertaken on the 9th of April, and which I was to make in London and Paris, in Frankfort, and finally in Vienna. The consequence was the speedy acceptance of the four points, with promising modifications on the part of Russia. The consequence of Usedom's journey was the unconditional acceptance of the four points.

'Neither England nor France give me credit for this, and I cannot deny, that the way in which those two Powers are now intriguing, in order to cause 'an impossible interpretation' of their sense on the part of the Emperor Nicholas, and to *force* a rupture! fills my innermost soul with indignation.

'The Governments that make real or pretended public opinion and its alleged bloodthirstiness a pretext for treading paths which are so crooked and so unworthy of Great Powers, *cannot* last long. The blood that is shed, will cry to heaven. But I am going too far, and beg you to bury these things in your bosom.

'Treskow asked me, in Your Highness' name, whether I should like to see you here now. I am always glad to see Your Highness in Berlin, at all times and all seasons. But, just for this reason, I am unable to give any advice. Your

journey will, in any case, cause umbrage in Vienna and Paris, and alarm our German Courts (which I need not name). "I know my Pappenheimers." Now let me thank you once more, from the bottom of my heart, for your kind and PRECIOUS letter. May your friendship and your confidence, dearest Duke, never be withdrawn from

‘Your Highness’ truly devoted friend and cousin,

‘FREDERICK WILLIAM.

‘P.S.—In the dreadful hurry in which I am writing to Your Highness, I have overlooked many corrections and other things, which afterwards compromise the beauty of my letter. I therefore entreat your kind indulgence. But far worse is the omission which I must make up for here. In the question of mobilising the troops, which is now being discussed in the Diet, *I shall not give way* AT ALL. If the majority should declare in favour of the matter, which is terrible to think of, I am nevertheless resolved to remain steadfastly firm and to protest *alone* and decidedly, let come of it what may. That the institution of executory measures on the part of the Confederation is the object of Buol-Austria’s desire, I know since last October. The whole thing is an old concocted plan, and is based on a *Liga catholica*, whose designs have been betrayed to me. If there were still a drop of old English blood in the present English Cabinet, it would have awakened long ago from the delusive dreams into which Napoleon has rocked it, and made it—DEFENCELESS!! Your Highness will tell me, that my attitude with regard to the possible resolution of the Confederation will break up the German Confederacy. I know it will, and I know, too, what I am doing. But rather that, than contribute towards effecting the usurpation of the old Imperial throne, and the sovereignty over Germany, with the aid of French troops! With such wine the young Emperor has been made drunk!!! The Rubicon is passed, the way to Rome is open. God help us! Austria’s circular Note of the 14th, which is indescribable, has, thank heaven, opened the eyes of many a Sovereign. No one doubts that Prussia is to furnish the promised advantages.

They are afraid, then, after all, that my treasure and my army might spoil their teeth. I know the full danger of my situation. But I look it straight in the face, and, with God and my good cause for allies, I am not afraid.'

In explanation of this last remark of the King, it might be desirable to recall the fact here, that the Austrian Circular Note of the 14th of January had caused, in many places, and especially in the Catholic Rhenish provinces, an unexpected excitement, which produced an extremely unpleasant impression in Berlin. Also in the following letter from the Prince of Prussia, it will easily be observed that the somewhat frank and sudden disclosure of the Austrian Imperial dream had caused the House of Hohenzollern many an anxious hour. The Prince wrote to me, in answer to my letter of the 19th of January:

'BERLIN, *January 26, 1855.*

'DEAREST FRIEND,—You will have grown impatient at my having left your confidential communication so long unanswered. But the confusion of affairs here is so great, that, after being here a full week, I must still own to having gained no clear idea as to what our intentions are! Hence I can only tell you *my* view, as to how I look at the situation, without therefore being able to indicate distinctly *where* we are going to.

'I find your explanation of your attitude in 1850, and at the present day, forcible in few words. It fully corresponds with my opinions, and I therefore entirely understand the dilemma in which your feelings and your resolutions are placed. A similar dilemma exists for us too, between feelings and resolutions, but they are of a different nature. Here, it is the personal relationship to the Emperor Nicholas that is in contradiction with the simply traced out policy which Prussia should pursue, for it is forgotten that there is a Russian policy which is not personal. The King is much too clear not to see this, but he cannot become master of his feelings. This is taken advantage of by G. N. and B. who only value *one* tendency in Russia: that of the conservatives,—not recognising that progress, in the rational sense of the term, is paving its way in that direction too. The King is, up to the present

moment, determined not to place himself on Russia's side, but, feeling as he does, he cannot make up his mind to employ such serious language towards his brother-in-law, as would have to be followed up by still more serious action. Hence our uncertain, changeable, often angry, and then relenting, language and actions. Our—horrid—special private missions to London and Paris have proved that the King does not want to break with the Western Powers, but the nature of their demands always bears the impress of the aforesaid dilemma; for the counter-services we offer in return are=O, so long as persons have influence, who, for nearly a year, have always contrived to throw obstacles in the way of our best resolutions.

‘That the great world-problem will be delayed, but not stayed, in its progress towards its ultimate end, by this policy of Prussia, appears to me unquestionable. And, since the force of circumstances will prove stronger than the policy of sentiment and all intrigues, I draw, from what I have said, the conclusion that, unless peace be established by next spring, Prussia will be actively drawn into the movement from the West to the East. But I start, of course, from the assumption that, in proclaiming the four points, Austria and the Western Powers will not go so far as to demand anything from Russia that would dishonour her, such as the razing of Sebastopol and the reducing of the Russian fleet, before they have got it, for such demands would necessarily give offence, not only here, but to public opinion generally, and would damage the position of those who made them.

‘The four points, construed *pure*, as they must be, contain the rejection of Russia with her Menzikoffian pretensions; moreover, a guarantee against her coming forward with them again (for some time, at least); nor do they exclude the establishment of a coast-station for the Western Powers, say at Sinope. Austria has double cause not to provoke Russia still further than she did on December 2; although we ourselves cannot ride too high a horse, for, between you and me, we have only got what we have been preparing for ourselves during the last nine months.

‘In thus comparing the facts, I draw the conclusion that,

unless peace is concluded, Prussia, in the course of the year, will be obliged to take active measures against the East.

‘I should therefore be inclined to construe your position towards the Austrian Note of the 14th inst., in connection with the proposal to mobilise, made by Austria in Frankfort on the Main, as follows: Although I must characterise this proposal as premature, I understand very well the security that Austria wants to gain by it for her own eventual position. I call the proposal premature, because it is made just at the moment when the preliminaries to the treaty for peace are beginning. For this reason, I should not be surprised if it did *not* obtain the majority in Frankfort on the Main.

‘Should this prove to be the case, it appears to me that the reply to the Note of the 14th should likewise be given in dilatory terms, seeing that the same reasons that dictate the answer in Frankfort on the Main, must needs also dictate the answer to the Note. For, an evasive answer to the invitation to join Austria unconditionally, and to place the contingent forces under the immediate command of the Emperor, would be justified by the fact, that the moment for so decided a measure had not yet arrived. On the other hand, if the proposal to mobilise should obtain the majority in the Diet, then the Note of the 14th will need no further reply, and, in as much as the election of a commander-in-chief of the confederate forces will then have to take place, the question as to the placing of the contingents under the command of the *Emperor* falls away.

It appears to me that Germany’s whole position in the Eastern Question, as already fixed by treaty, would justify us in giving Austria to understand, in our dilatory reply, that, in case the negotiations should prove fruitless, she may reckon on our not leaving her to pursue the great European and specially German interests unaided. For, in my opinion, it ought always to be borne in mind, that Russia must never be allowed to gain the favourable position of victor in this drama, in other words, to carry through her claims against the Porte. But this will be possible, if the European coalition is

broken up by Russia, because she may then hope to prove an easy match for its remnants. If she gains the victory in this question, her moral and physical supremacy in Europe is inevitable; *Holstein and Olmutz will then have been merely feeble forerunners of it.*

‘I will even go so far as to deny that the Emperor Nicholas and his immediate successor would then harbour thoughts of conquest, but *our dancing as Russia pipes* will be inevitable, because the orchestra represents a million bayonets. This, then, is the point of view, which leads me to assume that Prussia ultimately must and will take part in the action! If this were *firmly* and categorically brought to Russia’s knowledge, —we should have *peace* in a week!

‘By what *other* means Prussia thinks to extricate herself honourably from this dilemma, I am at a loss to foresee. My influence here is destroyed, and I don’t see yet how it is to revive again. However, I am keeping a strict watch for the moment when it may be revived!

‘In true affection,

‘Your devoted friend,

‘WILLIAM.’

The remarkable contents of these two letters from the King and his brother, so different in their tenor, speedily ripened the resolution I had already formed, to go to Berlin, though the King might not be wrong in what he said in his letter, as to my visit at that moment giving umbrage.

I believe I cannot give the reader a better picture of the situation, as I found it there, than by selecting among the many accounts I wrote at the time about my stay in Berlin, the one I sent to my brother, and inserting it here in full:

‘I have not written to you, since my journey to Berlin, because it served chiefly to confirm the contents of my former letter, and I wished, moreover, to await the development of the situation. This development, however, is now drawing out to an ever increasing length.

‘With regard to the success of my journey, I can only say

that I have every reason to be satisfied with it. I was received, not only by the King, but by all the members of the Royal family, in a way that was almost new to me in Berlin. My chief object was to keep up my personally amicable relations with Prussia, even though politics should still further separate me from her. Hence I had, on several occasions, long and detailed conversations with the King, and, though we were nearly always of a different opinion, this time at least a free interchange of views was possible.

‘I will mention particularly the following points:

‘1. It is still the longing desire of the King to step out of his isolated position, partly in order not to involve himself in further difficulties with the West, partly, too, as I frankly told him, to unite his voice with that of Russia at the Conferences of Peace.

‘2. He will not hear of an alliance with Russia. On this point he is quite firm. Besides, he declares Russia to be quite in the wrong in the real dispute, but says that, if the allies are not content with Russia’s concessions, it is they who put themselves in the wrong. Should the King, therefore, be forced to choose between the right and the left, I have no doubt, after my interviews with him, that he would decide against Russia. This may serve as a sure basis for all our calculations.

‘3. The King, it is true, will not hear of admitting any offensive action against Russia. But meanwhile, General Wedell has received very comprehensive instructions, by means of which an alliance may perhaps be effected. That his negotiations in Paris have, until now, led to no positive result, you will probably know.

‘4. The old Austrian idea still survives in the King. However, like most people in Berlin, he is just now greatly incensed against Austria. He believes in the existence of a great *liga catholica*. He attributes to the Emperor Francis Joseph the wildest schemes of rulership over Germany, nor was he put out by my answer, that Austria, if she had liked, could have had the German Imperial Crown long ago, and from his own hands. Nevertheless, he expressed the old view that it was not only necessary to give Austria the Roman-

German Imperial Crown, (in which case Prussia is to receive a sort of constablenesship—the German Royal Crown) but he also declared his positive intention of coming to the assistance of the Austrians, in case they should be defeated by Russia, and beaten back over their frontier. He would never let Austria fall, he said. This is evidently one of the granitic parts in the mind of the King.

‘5. He said some hard words about the Gerlachs and the Niebuhrs, when I drew his attention to the want of confidence which Prussia was everywhere meeting with. He called them “not crack-brained, but pig-headed,” (*nicht hirn-verbrannte, sondern verrannte Köpfe*), and said that he had long ceased to place any confidence in them. He did not speak much better of Manteuffel, but declared, notwithstanding, that he now obeyed him. He had placed a constable, he said, before each of his doors.

‘From all this, I conclude that the King is by no means altogether in earnest with his refusal to enter into the offensive action against Russia, and that he will be inclined, in order to obtain easier access to the conferences of peace, eventually to promise some offensive measures. What these will prove to be, however, cannot be gathered as yet. Still, it would be a great thing, if Prussia were only to enter at all into a league offensive with the Western Powers. The carrying out of the alliance will, after all, always be to some extent in the hands of the generals commanding, provided that men like the Prince of Prussia are placed at the head.

‘*P.S.*—Meanwhile, I learn from Berlin that my assumption with regard to the King of Prussia is about to be realised. The King, then, has really approved of the draft of a treaty analagous to the treaty of December, and even specifying the particulars of the offensive measures. This treaty would already be concluded, if Manteuffel had given Count Hatzfeld the order to conclude it, as quickly as the King gave it to his special envoy. The French project, which has been submitted in the meantime, appears to be putting the matter in question again, because it is giving them time in Berlin to change their minds again. The *Kreuzzeitung* party will exert all its efforts.

Manteuffel is opposed to any negotiations carried on outside Berlin, and to the special missions of the King. It is possible, therefore, that he and others will succeed in inducing the King, after he has yielded in principle, to raise difficulties as to the details. My advice would be, not to cling too anxiously to details.'

The negotiations entered into with the Western Powers led to no result, and the mission of Count Wedell to Paris was only a last attempt on the part of the King to assume a decided attitude in this great European complication. Meanwhile, the death of the Emperor Nicholas changed the aspect of international affairs more than anything else. But I may be permitted to advert to this incident in connection with the general events that had been keeping the world busy since the outbreak of the Crimean war.

CHAPTER IV

A COUNCIL OF WAR IN PARIS.—THE TONE IN THE FRENCH ARMY.—THE FIRST ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE COMBINED FLEETS.—THE ALLIED ARMIES IN GALLIPOLI.—LETTERS FROM PRINCE CHIMAY TO THE DUKE.—THE SIEGE OF SILISTRIA.—RUSSIA'S MISFORTUNES IN TURKEY.—THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON'S PATIENCE WITH AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA.—MISMANAGEMENT OF FRENCH MILITARY AFFAIRS.—DISSATISFACTION IN FRANCE.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—THE SPANISH REVOLUTION.—ITS EFFECT ON NAPOLEON.—LETTER FROM PRINCE CHIMAY TO KING LEOPOLD OF BELGIUM.—THE FIRST IDEA OF THE EXPEDITION TO THE CRIMEA.—PRINCE ALBERT'S SHARE IN IT.—LETTER FROM THE PRINCE.—PRINCE ALBERT'S VISIT TO NAPOLEON AT BOULOGNE.—LETTER FROM THE DUKE TO PRINCE ALBERT.—THE BATTLE ON THE ALMA.—RUMOURED FALL OF SEBASTOPOL.—THE ENGLISH ARMY AND THE BATTLE OF INKERMAN.—THE FOREIGN LEGION.—DIFFICULTIES OF THE SITUATION.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT TO THE KING OF BELGIUM.—LETTER FROM NAPOLEON TO THE DUKE.—HE COMPLAINS OF THE WANT OF ENERGY ON THE PART OF THE ENGLISH COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.—DEATH OF THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS.—FRESH NEGOTIATIONS.—AUSTRIA LEAVES THE WESTERN POWERS IN THE LURCH.—LETTER FROM COUNT BUOL TO THE DUKE.—VISIT OF THE EMPEROR AND THE EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH TO ENGLAND.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT ON ENGLISH POLITICAL AFFAIRS.—PRUSSIA AND THE CONFERENCES IN VIENNA.—LETTERS FROM THE KING OF PRUSSIA AND HIS BROTHER.—THE DUKE IN PARIS AND LONDON.—HIS LETTER TO THE KING OF PRUSSIA.—REPORT OF PRINCE WILLIAM OF BADEN ON THE CONDITION OF RUSSIA.—THE STORMING OF SEBASTOPOL.—THE THEFT OF RUSSIAN DESPATCHES IN BERLIN.—THE END OF THE WAR.

DURING my first stay with the Emperor Napoleon, in 1854, I became witness of a scene, which was extremely characteristic of the state of the French army, and could not fail to pro-

duce a painful and almost alarming impression upon me. Later on, I had reason enough to remember my experiences in the Tuileries, when others thought the accounts of the progress of the war and the state of affairs in the armies incredible.

It was after one of my conversations with the Emperor, which I have reported in the first chapter of this volume, when Napoleon invited me to accompany him into another room, where a number of new inventions with regard to guns and projectiles were being shown by Colonel Mignet and a few Englishmen. Hereupon followed reports of various descriptions, and at length the Emperor took his place at a conference table, round which a large number of Generals had gathered, apparently to hold a council. The Emperor hesitated a moment, and then said to me in German: 'We have no secrets to hide from you. Listen.'

I assisted, in consequence, at a council which afforded me an opportunity to make acquaintance with a number of eminent officers, whose names were afterwards mentioned often enough. But, strange to say, Marshal St Arnaud, who had already been chosen as commander-in-chief, was missing among them. When we were all leaving, I expressed my surprise at this circumstance to Marshal Magnan, whom I knew intimately from Brussels, where he had been my military superior. He answered however, in a tone of the greatest indifference, that it was of little consequence whether the man was there or not; that St Arnaud was in failing health, as it was, and would not carry out the affair. *La canaille crèvera en route*, he wound up with great assurance.

I said to myself at the time, that, if as little harmony prevailed in the army as there did among the marshals of the empire, its military successes did not promise to be very brilliant. And, indeed, the equipment of the army left much to be desired, and the troops which were ordered to the East, and which the Emperor showed me, gave me by no means a very high conception of their military ability. I was involuntarily reminded of the apprehensions, which I had expressed a year before to my brother, with regard to the English troops; and these, combined with the French, who made a no better

impression, were now to undergo a war, in far distant parts, against a probably much more numerous army!

Under these circumstances, it was a proof of a certain kind of self-knowledge, that the allied Powers, at the commencement of the war, placed all their hopes in the English navy, which Charles Napier was about to lead into the Baltic. But, what the English ships wanted in that dangerous sea, with its inhospitable coasts, and what they were intended to do, on this point there was not the slightest certainty, either in England, or in France. As to the English fleet being assisted by the French, there was no idea of such a thing. *Aucun marin français,* so Prince Chimay assured me, *'ne connaît la Baltique.'*

The English, on their part, were convinced that the mere appearance of the allied fleets in the Baltic would so terrify the Government and the people in St Petersburg, that peace would speedily be concluded. A few weeks later, Prince Chimay wrote to me very characteristically: *'Lord Cowley a dit, il y a deux jours: Lorsque les flottes russes seront brûlées dans la Baltique et dans la mer noire, la guerre aura perdu beaucoup de son intérêt. Ce propos est d'une naïveté charmante et tout britannique.'*

When I asked Lord Cowley, in Paris, what was really intended in the Baltic, if the fleet had not orders to effect the landing of troops in Finland, he replied with the avowal that there was nobody, either on this side of the channel, or on the other, who could answer the question.

How rapidly the disappointments afterwards followed, and how the unfortunate Charles Napier was made the scapegoat for an expedition which had no object from the very outset, is presumably still in everyone's memory. The mighty fleet knew little better means to make itself talked of, than by petty destructions, and by the burning of villages and wood and tar stores. It sailed to Cronstadt, merely to convince itself that the fortress was unassailable, and, in August, landed a few troops on the Aland islands, under Baraguay d'Hilliers, who conquered the little fortress of Bomarsund.

Meanwhile, the English army, under Raglan, and the French

under St Arnaud, had left Marseilles in April. The English at first meant to muster 10,000 men, and Lord Raglan had difficulty in getting double that number. That far more troops would be required, was only reluctantly admitted in public. On the French side, the first division was led by Canrobert, who spoke of St Arnaud as slightlyingly as Prince Jerome Napoleon did, who was destined to take part in the war, as it were, in order to connect at least the great name with the standards of the Empire, since the talent of the leader was wanting. Gallipoli was the first destination of the French troops, and they had scarcely arrived there, when the worst accounts came in, and the Generals declared: *Chaque jour démontre les dangers de l'expédition impuissante dans les conditions actuelles.*

Whilst the Generals were disputing as to which was the best means of coming to the assistance of the Turks, my excellent friend Chimay made the splendid remark, *si l'on ne se hâte pas, on court grand risque de ne plus trouver que des turbans, mais pas de Turcs.* In the middle of April, a council of war had been held in Paris, in which the Duke of Cambridge took part, and which decided that the French army should take the offensive in Europe, and the English in Asia. When Gallipoli was reached, everyone agreed in the opinion that the Anglo-French army ought to be concentrated in Varna. But the transport of the troops proceeded at so slow a pace, that there could be no idea of opening the campaign before the end of May.

By the 28th of April, no less than fifteen ships, with a large portion of the cavalry, had returned to Marseilles, after three weeks of stormy weather, and, in the meantime, news was not wanting from the East, according to which the idle and ill-humoured English and French troops were fighting there amongst each other. It was not to be wondered at, if Prince Chimay wrote to me, on the 5th of May, in behalf of the Emperor:

L'empereur me charge tout spécialement de remercier Votre Altesse de la communication que je viens de lui faire en Son nom.

Il désire recevoir le plus souvent possible des renseignements analogues.

Il est hors de doute aujourd'hui que l'Allemagne sera obligée de prendre une part active à la lutte, si elle tient à prévenir une conflagration générale. La situation actuelle deviendra promptement intolérable pour tout le monde. On n'a aucune nouvelle sérieuse du théâtre de la guerre, mais on s'attend d'un jour à l'autre à un acte décisif de la part de Paskiewitsch' etc., etc. .

The chief reason for delaying the military development of the French active forces was, no doubt, more of a political than a strategic kind, and I fear I must subject the reader to a still further trial of patience by referring back to a letter of the previous March, which shows the feelings of the Emperor at the outbreak of the war more plainly than any other document, and proves how extremely loath Napoleon was to let his troops proceed to the East, so long as he was uncertain whether the alteration of the European map, as desired by him, would be attainable or not.

L'empereur,' Prince Chimay then wrote to me 'm'a chargé d'exprimer à Votre Altesse sa vive reconnaissance. . . . Sa Majesté m'a paru impressionnée de tout ce qui concerne Berlin et M. de Manteuffel, et je pense que sur terre comme sur mer ce côté sera l'objet d'une active surveillance et d'une certaine pression dans l'ordre des idées de Votre Altesse, c'est à dire en dehors de toute pensée agressive contre l'Allemagne Rhénane. Sa Majesté ne m'a laissé aucun doute sur ce point capital.

Quant à l'Autriche, l'Empereur m'a dit, en termes formels, qu'il croyait être sûr de son concours actif, exclusivement subordonné à la présence des alliés à Constantinople, présence destinée à devenir le signal de ce concours. Je ne puis, a-t-il ajouté, partager les appréhensions du Duc à cet égard, d'abord voilà deux ans que je négocie avec la Prusse et l'Autriche sans jamais les avoir vues d'accord. Au fond, elles disent pis que pendre l'une à l'autre. Tous les intérêts matériels de l'Autriche la ramènent vers moi, si elle est bien, elle peut défendre sa Hongrie, moi je lui garantis l'Italie.

Si elle est mal, j'entre en Piedmont et elle grandit la Russie, car alors je ne resterai pas en Orient, il ne me faudra pas longtemps

pour ramener mon armée à Triest et à Venise et laisser l'Autriche se débattre sur le Danube. Ceci est bien remarquable, Monseigneur car j'y vois une preuve que l'hypothèse Italienne n'a nullement été perdue de vue dans les mesures que la France va prendre. L'Autriche doit se le tenir pour dit.

Sa Majesté m'a dit encore qu'elle avait trop de confiance dans la jeune loyauté et le caractère de l'Empereur François Joseph pour admettre la moindre duplicité dans ces déclarations. Je le crois d'autant plus que le moyen d'y remédier est prompt et efficace et que par conséquent il n'y a pour la France aucun inconvénient à affecter la plus grande sécurité dans la sincérité Autrichienne jusqu'au jour des explications décisives et finales.

Les alliés seront à Constantinople dans une quinzaine de jours, nous verrons donc promptement les effets de la reconnaissance de l'Autriche en faveur de son sauveur de 1848, ou l'armée de Lyon sur les Alpes !

Le dénouement sera d'autant plus pressé que de jour en jour l'expédition d'Orient devient moins populaire, à mesure qu'on en apprécie mieux la parfaite inutilité pratique. La baisse constante des fonds Anglais et Français, l'inquiétude croissante de l'industrie, tout commande aux gouvernements une solution prompte et décisive etc.

The rapid decisions, however, which Napoleon had so ardently desired, did not take place in the politics of Austria and Prussia, as has been shown in the foregoing chapter. In consequence, the military operations of the allied Western Powers were also limited to half measures. The French Government occupied itself almost more in mustering troops along the frontier of France, from Lyons to St Omer, than in sending the army to the East. Hence, the forces of the allies assembled very slowly, and it lasted until July before 50,000 men were united near Varna. But the worst was that, here too, the troops found scarcely anything better to do, than to die of fever and cholera.

The changeable war which had been carried on, since last February, between the Turks and the Russians on the Danube, afforded the Russians so few chances of making conquests that it hardly appeared advisable just yet for the Western

Powers to take a strong offensive. After all, the Turks were showing themselves strong enough to keep the army of their hereditary enemy at bay, and even Paskiewitsch, when the Emperor placed him at the head of the army, in the middle of April, was no longer able to lay the fearful demon of misfortune, which, from the very outset, appeared to be pursuing the Russians. The siege of Silistria followed, which was defended by the Turks, with much-praised valour, until the 13th of June. On this day, which became so fatal to the Russians, Omer Pasha effected the relief of the fortress by a well-arranged attack from the side of Little Wallachia, made simultaneously with a brave sortie on the part of the besieged garrison.

As the hero of Erivan had already previously laid down his command in a fit of ill-humour, and the Emperor had entrusted Gortschakoff, for the second time, with the leadership of the army, the catastrophe before Silistria doubly injured the credit of Russia. With a loss of 12,000 combatants, including the technical director of the siege-works, General Schilder himself, and with the retreat of the whole army to the left banks of the Danube, on the 20th of April, ended the attack of the great Czar on the Turkish Power, which he had so rashly believed to be defunct.

The allies, therefore, might have quietly awaited the evacuation of Wallachia, but the retreating army subjected the Turks to a defeat near Tschernavoda, which roused the French out of their inactivity. General Espinasse was to pursue the Russians, and set out for this purpose from Kustendjeh. But by imprudent marches through swampy country, with which he was unacquainted, he lost half of his troops, without even having seen the enemy.

The retreat of the Russian army out of the Principalities was effected at last, as has been mentioned before, from reasons of general policy. Thus it could well be said, that the expedition of the Western Powers, up to that time, had been, if not entirely fruitless, at least not very glorious. The dissatisfaction in France had consequently reached a very dangerous pitch in the months of June and July, and although the general

discontent respecting the proceedings in the East found comparatively little expression in public, yet the embarrassments of the situation, in which Louis Napoleon was placed, were very great and almost overwhelming.

According to the secret reports which I received from the best sources through Prince Chimay, the sole means of saving the Empire appeared, on more than one day, to lie in a violent outburst against the hesitating German Powers, which had become necessary owing to the feeling in the country. To prevent this was, in fact, my foremost endeavour, and the Emperor still let himself be appeased by the hope that Austria and Prussia would ultimately after all have to abandon their reserve. Considering the state of affairs that really existed in Berlin, and even in Vienna, I had to acknowledge it as an act of political patience on the part of the Emperor that he allowed himself to be kept in this opinion so long, and chiefly, as Chimay wrote to me, owing to the reports he received from me. *La note remarquable de votre Altesse*, Chimay wrote to me on the 24th of May, *a été lue attentivement par l'Empereur et a paru l'impressionner beaucoup. Je crains plus que jamais une issue fatale à la suite de toutes ces lenteurs.*

To the evils of politics was added, just at that moment, the personal suffering of the Emperor. It was then that his serious kidney disease first declared itself, from which he never recovered again, and he was so exhausted by violent neuralgic pains, that he appeared to grow older, from day to day, under the very eyes of those who surrounded him. Discord and rivalries among the Generals embittered in every way the mood of the Emperor, who was, on the other hand, not strong enough to put a stop to the goings-on of his minions, and the favouritism shown by the Ministers to every kind of incapacity. 'Notorious blockheads,' as Chimay assured me, were made Generals in consequence of their comradeship with Fould or Baraguay d'Hilliers, and the public scoffed and railed at the bad selection of the leaders of this costly and in every respect unpopular enterprise.

Les nouvelles d'Orient, Prince Chimay wrote on the 18th June,

deviennent chaque jour de plus en plus rares à Paris, encore sont elles presque toutes fausses. Les derniers rapports de St Arnaud sont très sombres. Il part chaque mois de Marseille vingt millions en or pour le service de l'armée, indépendamment de tous les approvisionnements, et plus on ira, plus la dépense augmentera.

Chaque voyage d'une frégate à vapeur entre Toulon et Constantinople coûte, aller et retour, mille francs. Tout cela est effrayant pour les finances et l'avenir, car ce n'est qu'un début.

Le camp de midi est douteux. On s'occupe surtout de celui du nord. Les soldats manquent, l'armée a été épuisée et désorganisée par la formation de l'armée d'Orient.

Dieu sait ce qu'il adviendrait de la France en présence d'une coalition que beaucoup de gens persistent à entrevoir derrière les lignes russes sur la Vistule.

The confidence which was reposed in the Emperor Napoleon personally, vanished, even in the most faithful of his adherents, in face of the many blunders that were being committed everywhere : *La politique impériale manque un peu d'ensemble et de prévoyance*, it was said in Paris, and how could this be otherwise, *si l'initiative des idées est dévolue dans l'absolutisme à une seule personne ou intelligence*.

In many towns in France, there were bread riots, behind which the party of the Red Republic appeared to be rearing its head threateningly. The Ministry had seriously to avoid denuding the country too much of troops. In the Government, Morny and King Jerome were disputing who was to have the greatest influence. For Morny's party, the appointment of Billaut in the place of Persigny in the management of affairs was a great defeat.

Monsieur Billaut, ami de Jérôme, va naturellement développer la pensée de l'Empire dynastique, un homme très habile et qui rendra à l'administration intérieure une énergie qu'elle avait malheureusement et totalement perdue sous Persigny.

Special interest attached to the scenes which had preceded this change of government in the council of the Emperor. When Persigny was reproached with being incapable, he said

to Fould: *Je puis perdre la France par incapacité, mais du moins je ne la vends pas.*

Meanwhile, the new Ministry was not in a position to maintain peace in the country, and the police were everywhere finding traces of prepared attempts and revolutionary risings. Napoleon was excessively alarmed, and repaired to Boulogne, in order to await, in the midst of his troops, better news from the seat of war.

My brother forcibly described the situation of the Emperor, when he said that he was like the manager of a theatre, in which the French took their seats as spectators, expecting to see a new piece produced every day. But this was difficult to accomplish, particularly as the English and the French were mutually taxing one another with being the cause of their having to lie idle at Varna.

Although the English Press was not sparing with reproaches of every kind against its own Government, still it showed far less consideration in its criticism of the French state of affairs. It was this mood that dictated a letter of my brother's, dated the end of June, which was characteristic of the position of both parties.

‘My chief aim here is that our policy should be distinguished in the judgment of others by its consistent tendency and its fairness. The former quality, being in accordance with the national character, is easily to be attained here. The latter, inasmuch as it is incompatible with the character of an insular people, who are devoid of all and every knowledge of the Continent, is much more difficult, but, for that very reason, requires my special attention. The Ministry causes us much trouble. Aberdeen is still in 1814, Palmerston in 1848, and Lord John in 1830. Parliament and the Press are, one and all, suddenly born generals, and are only prevented from conquering Russia by the army, which (as they say) is good for nothing, by the War Department, which should only be conducted by Palmerston, and by the Court, which keeps Palmerston out of it.

‘Our great anxiety is Marshal St Arnaud, who is a Chevalier d’Industrie through and through, and in the hands of a certain T., of whom the French themselves do not doubt

that he is capable of accepting silver, or even paper, roubles. We cannot induce the French army to advance, until it has all its cavalry, which may last until the end of July.'

If, in spite of its enormous costs, the alliance of the Western Powers proved extremely unfruitful in a military respect, it was also destined, at a most inopportune moment, to be subjected to a severe political test by the state of affairs in Spain, where, since February, the revolution had been rearing its head more boldly than ever, and was every day threatening to overthrow the rule of Queen Isabella. Napoleon had been seized by the curious idea of bringing about a union of the Kingdoms of Portugal and Spain. He thought he ought to offer to our house a further extension of its power, and hoped to be encouraged in this undertaking by the English Royal Family.

The Emperor was with great difficulty persuaded that such a union of the Iberian peninsula ran quite counter to English interests, and that no English Minister would give his consent to it.

When, on the 17th of July, the general insurrection broke out in Madrid, it was feared in Paris that this event would react directly on France, and the Emperor Napoleon, to the great vexation of King Jerome, repaired to Biarritz, in order to escape from all consequences, and more particularly from the necessity of taking any decisions. He remained there, against the advice of his Ministers, even when the Progressist party under Espartero had taken the Government in Madrid into their own hands, after the expulsion of the Queen Mother. At the end of July, Prince Chimay wrote a characteristic account of the Emperor to King Leopold, of which the King sent me a copy:

Il paraît que malgré les vives instances de ses ministres, l'Empereur reste à Biarritz, seulement il leur a enjoint de ne pas sortir de Paris. Cette nouvelle preuve d'imperturbable tenacité à ses idées jusque dans des détails secondaires, pourrait cependant amener des conséquences bien sérieuses, et, comme le disait son oncle hier encore, c'est vraiment tenter la providence.

En effet, il faut que les partis soient bien désorganisés et affaiblis pour ne pas chercher à profiter de l'occasion peut-être unique qui semble s'offrir à eux. L'Empereur est absent, il n'y a aucune cohésion dans l'autorité, pas un homme, pas un ministre assez fort, assez osé pour prendre la moindre initiative en cas de danger ; les maréchaux divisés et rivaux, l'armée de Paris disloquée, remplacée par des régiments nouveaux et étrangers à la stratégie émeutière de Paris, le commerce mécontent, la population effrayée par la misère et le choléra, tel est l'ensemble que l'Empereur livre aux heureuses chances de son étoile. . . .

Les nouvelles d'Orient sont confuses comme toujours. Les Autrichiens demandent que les Turcs se retirent des principautés avant leur entrée. Le prince croit que les Turcs refuseront, et la question lui semble se compliquer à chaque pas. L'expédition de Crime est en délibéré, et chaque jour St Arnaud montre plus d'incertitude et d'appréhension. L'armée souffre des maux et de l'insuffisance de toutes choses. Le Prince Napoléon est dans les meilleurs termes avec le duc de Cambridge, dont il partage largement l'extrême ennui.

When, a short time afterwards, the wretched news of the failure of the expedition of General Espinasse reached Paris, even the officers and soldiers were seized with dangerous misgivings as to the capability and the skill of the army. Under these circumstances, the two allied Governments became more and more bent on carrying out the project of a great expedition against the Crimea. In the hope of striking the Eastern Giant a rapid and decisive blow in the only vulnerable spot that seemed accessible to the Western Powers, and thus forcing him to make peace, a war was now commenced, which was to drag on throughout a whole year, and to swallow up thousands of human lives to little or no purpose.

The expedition which is connected with the name of Sebastopol, was, without question, one of the most unfortunate that has ever been recorded by the history of warfare in any century. It recalled the times of the crusaders, when an obstinate and fanatic multitude used to work with insufficient means at the siege of Damietta or Acre, in order to invest the superstitious belief in the ultimate triumph of the Christian

and occidental cause with all the charms of romantic adventure. Sebastopol was now fought for, like Richard the Lion-hearted and King Philip Augustus fought for Ptolemais, for the sole purpose of returning with empty hands, and relating at home that the robber-haunt of the enemy had been destroyed.

However that might be, the Western Powers could not suffer it to appear as if they were returning from the war without having effected their purpose. The French needed, above all things, a success, and so the Crimean project, which had been fluttering in the air, as it were, for months, gradually gained an ever increasing significance. History has frequently raised the question who was the real inventor of this peculiar and, in a military respect, surprising plan, without being able to give a positive answer to it. Military men have often asserted that the idea was a specifically 'civilian' one, and could only have arisen in the head of a diplomatist.

The misfortune of the Turks at Sinope had, no doubt, long ago drawn the attention of the statesmen of the Western Powers to the Russian navy arsenal on the Black Sea. The idea of conquering Sebastopol, says a modern English historian, gained, as a matter of justice, a kind of dramatic interest with the English public.

Just this point of view was, no doubt, also in accordance with my brother's mode of thinking, and although I believe I may utterly repudiate the notion of ascribing to Prince Albert the authorship of the plan of the Crimean campaign, yet impartiality obliges me to confess that the Prince had a certain share in promoting this curious scheme, after it had once been proposed. He vied with Lord Palmerston in recommending the attack on Sebastopol, and he expressed his hopes in this regard long before the Emperor Napoleon, for whom the originality of the idea has been claimed without any foundation whatever.

I was always of opinion that no one had reason to boast much of being the author of this plan of campaign. However, at the beginning of May, my brother was urging the necessity of obtaining possession of Sebastopol. It is known from the

Life of the Prince Consort that he thereupon began to occupy himself more seriously with this question, and that he wrote a memorandum which did not remain without some influence on the actual execution of the plan. Apart from this now published memorial,* the reader may attach some interest to the letter in which my brother informed me of the intended expedition to Sebastopol. As he here brings chiefly political reasons into the field, the letter serves as a welcome supplement to the memorandum.

‘It is the military movements that make me anxious. The raising of the siege of Silistria is a fearful humiliation for the Russians, and delivers Turkey from the momentary danger of invasion. On the other hand, by abandoning Wallachia, the Russians gain a much stronger military position, and a strong basis for their operations, which is not only difficult to break through, but is also very dangerous for Austria.

‘*The right thing for us to do, is undoubtedly to attack the Crimea.* In whatsoever way the war may end, the East has not the slightest chance of life, so long as Sebastopol remains as it is.

‘It is the *only* port in the Black Sea, and juts right into the middle of it. If the Russians transform their fleet into a fleet of screw-steamers, they will in future no longer let 50,000 men perish before a few old fortresses, but will be in Constantinople, fifteen hours after their fleet sets sail, with any army they like! Quicker, indeed, than the telegraph can announce the fact to the remainder of Europe! All our efforts will then have been to no purpose, and nobody will in future be able to prevent this.

‘On the other hand, Austria, in her position towards Russia,

* The Memorandum in the Life of the Prince Consort, iii. 84. The remark is there made, (iii. 80) that the Duke of Newcastle had, in March, sent to the Queen the copy of a plan which had been sketched by the Emperor Napoleon. But these projects were still quite immature, and stand on a level with the conquest of Finland. Without Austria and Prussia, of course, only the North or the South of the Russian Empire could be taken into consideration. But Napoleon seriously thought of Poland, and not of the Crimea. The treatment of the whole question by Kinglake, who declares that, when the decisive despatch was being read in Newcastle's Cabinet, on the 28th of June, the English Ministers went fast asleep, has raised so much dust that I do not feel called upon to add anything from my standpoint. See McCarthy Ch. 27.

has always reckoned on the allied armies co-operating with her own, and you will recollect that the answer to all urgings from the West was ever the same: You are not yet on the Danube. We are much nearer. When you are once at the seat of war, the matter will be different.

‘We are now there, and Austria seems about to arrive at a decision. Will she not expect, with good cause, that we should cover her right wing, and operate on the left flank of the enemy? And yet this means the certain ruin of our armies, which, just now, in this unwholesome season of the year, would be sure to die of fever in the swamps on the Lower Danube, like flies, or like the Russians have done before!’

‘Besides, they have now completely sucked the country dry, and we have extremely few means of transport; we should lose our connection with the sea, and place ourselves against an overwhelming force, in a plain, without sufficient cavalry. It is here that the difficulty will lie. A refusal to advance along the Danube will alarm Austria, and, if we do so, it will do her no good, and ruin us. I consider the diversion towards Sebastopol to be politically the correct thing, and in a military respect the most effective. I should consider even a landing at Odessa in the rear of the Russians to be more effective than an attack on their left wing. Besides, our public, and the position of the Emperor Napoleon III, have to be taken into account. We require a success, such as even a battle gained in Moldavia cannot afford us.

‘To-day, 10,000 French are embarking at Calais in one of our fleets, in order to be conveyed to the Baltic. 5000 mixed troops are already there. We are also sending an additional 5000 men to the East, which will bring our infantry there up to 29,000 bayonets, with cavalry and artillery 35,000 men. The French have not yet reached, or exceeded, 45,000. We are beginning to organise the Turks, and shall shortly have to pay them too. Their irregular troops are the chief difficulty in every kind of operation. They have plundered everything round about Varna, and we have not even found any inhabitants there. My military disquisition has become lengthy, and I will therefore close.’

The most curious circumstance connected with the expedition to the Crimea, was that the whole world had long been talking about it, and that the Governments had, as it were, themselves given notice to the Russians of the attack that was planned. In every newspaper, mention was made of the orders which had been issued to the Generals in Varna, and in Paris and London the great expedition was talked of as a matter that would shortly bring the war to a speedy end.

What effects this was bound to produce, may be best measured, if it is remembered that the decisive Cabinet Council in England had been held on the 28th of June, and the landing of the allies in the Crimea began on the morning of the 14th of September. The fact that the allies, on setting foot on the peninsula, did not meet with a fearful catastrophe, can only be explained by the fortunate circumstance, that the military incapacity of the Russians in profiting by this advantage was just as great, as the want of caution shown by the allied armies in carrying out their operations.

A few days before the great and fatal landing of the troops of the Western Powers in the Crimea, the '*Entente cordiale*' between the two allied States had received an outward recognition, and a personal confirmation, which marked the summit of the political situation in the Eastern complication.

Prince Albert and Napoleon saw and conversed with one another, from the 5th to the 9th of September, in the camp at Boulogne, burying the antipathy which they had so long cherished against one another in a pleasant interchange of their convictions and experiences. Indeed, the intimacy that sprung up between them during the personal intercourse of those few days, was far more friendly than could ever have been expected.

It may be said, that, since those days, the whole of Old England had totally changed its manner towards the Tuileries. Nobody, who, but a year ago, had observed the relations between the two Courts, ventured to entertain the hope that a meeting which was afterwards to have so important a bearing on the history of all Europe, would pass off so

satisfactorily, and it may easily be imagined with what interest I looked forward to my brother's accounts.

Far as I had been from working towards this event by means of indiscreet influences, nevertheless it was plain to me that the close relations which I had established with the Emperor of the French would, sooner or later, either be taken up, or be violently crossed, by my brother. Hence, what I could do, indirectly, towards facilitating an understanding between Louis Napoleon and Prince Albert, had been taken in hand during my visit in March, and had been continued later on through the mediation of Prince Chimay. It was particularly agreeable moreover, that the visit of my uncle and his son to Boulogne had preceded that of my brother.

As to the outward character of the meeting, and the impressions which my uncle and my brother received, everybody is now fully informed on that subject by the *Life of the Prince Consort*. In his 'Memorandum on my visit to Boulogne,' Prince Albert, in a measure, sent a frank and honourable declaration to his relations and friends, in which, while acknowledging the more eminent qualities of Napoleon, he in a certain sense disavowed the attitude he had hitherto assumed towards him. Thus, whilst the English and French troops were about to proceed to the Tauric Chersonesus, and put the alliance of the two Western nations to the test of fire, personal relations were being established in Boulogne between two men, who, by a curious concatenation of circumstances, possessed rather a moral and ideal, than an inherited, influence in the great nations of Western Europe.

'The day after to-morrow evening,' my brother wrote to me, on September 2, 'I shall embark here for Boulogne, and the wind is already making every effort in its power to lash the sea into fury.' Not only the sea voyage, which was unpleasant to him in itself, had somewhat depressed my brother's spirit, but he was also dissatisfied with the course of events in the East.

'Particularly in Varna, an incredible fertility is being developed in creating and discovering difficulties, which are said to stand in the way of the expedition to Sebastopol, and I

am dividing my vexation between this circumstance and the state of affairs in Berlin, where they are in very sooth leading the Almighty into temptation !’

The more unfavourable the auspices therefore seemed, under which the visit to Boulogne took place, the pleasanter was the news which my brother sent me from Osborne, immediately after his return there from Paris, on the 12th of September. His accounts of Napoleon were quite in accord with the notes and descriptions of the visit which are already known, and were as enthusiastic as it was possible for the critical nature of Prince Albert to be. I answered him on the 19th of September, taking occasion to advert to a few less noticed points of view with regard to the general political situation, and especially the expedition to the Crimea.

‘ CALLENBERG, September 19, 1854.

‘ I have not written to you for some time, and owe you an answer to two kind letters. During your excursion, I did not wish to bother you with my letters. Besides, I hoped to hear from you myself about your impressions in Boulogne. This has now taken place, and *I cannot deny that a great load is off my mind, seeing that on this interview*, and the impression which you made upon one another, the welfare of Europe in chief part depends.

‘ Considering the peculiar character of the Emperor, and the circumstance that he is, after all, the absolute ruler, of France, it was a positive necessity, that, unless your alliance was to be exposed to constant petty dangers, the Emperor should be strengthened in his confidence by personal intercourse with you. He himself shared this opinion, though it was with a certain anxiety that he looked forward to the results of the interview. It is highly gratifying, not only that your letter expresses satisfaction, but that also the accounts I have from France are of the same tenor.

‘ In face of the hopeless condition of Central Europe, the tardiness of Austria in advancing on the straight course, and the reluctance of Prussia, our sole hope, and perhaps our safety, is to be sought in an alliance between yourselves and

France. As long as you remain united, and each restrains the other from pursuing purely a policy of self-interest, the general subversion of European affairs may still be delayed. For this reason, *we* are quietly working *for* this great end, in the same degree as Russia and her adherents are working against it.

‘How cunningly she operates, and what accurate knowledge she possesses of the moral force and the sentiments of the German Sovereigns, can be gathered from the circumstance that she has found it so easy to bind the hands of all the Sovereigns, each by different representations and different means. Austria is no less bound for the moment. In fact, the steps she may shortly take, will depend solely on the success of the expedition in the Black Sea.

‘As to that expedition, I share your hopes for its success in every respect. But the enterprise is of too great a magnitude to be staked on mere chance events. I regret that a great part of the plan has been made so public. The strength and the preponderance of the one belligerent Power lies in the fact that, when once master of the Sea, it can concentrate a certain numerical force of troops, and unexpectedly swoop down with them on any single point, whereas the other has daily to be on the *qui vive* with regard to every point where an attack is *possible*, and consequently finds it impracticable to appear in equal force at every point.

‘The more the manœuvres of the fleet and the transport of the troops are kept secret, the greater the advantage. The battle of Fredericia, with all its useless bloodshed, would never have taken place, if General Bonin could have ascertained that eleven batallions of Danes had landed at midnight opposite Fredericia. As it happened, however, he was attacked at 3 o’clock, and expected only to find the well-known force of the garrison of Fredericia opposed to him. In spite of all speed, it was impossible for me to inform the General before the battle commenced, of the intended landing, which had been betrayed to me.

‘I will not enter into further details here, and not give scope to my apprehensions. Heaven, let us hope, will not forsake the good cause.’

The day after I had written this letter, my faith in the latter respect was to be brilliantly justified by the happy event of the battle on the Alma. This was the first great news which filled all occidental nations with the same genuine enthusiasm.

By the combined attack of the French and the English, who, but a few days before, had landed to the south of Eupatoria, on the Western coast of the Crimea, the Russians were driven with the greatest bravery out of their fortified positions on the Alma, and only the lack of cavalry on the part of the allies saved the army of Mentschikoff from total destruction. The siege of Sebastopol now commenced, after the opportunity of taking the fortress by a speedy attack had, as some said, been neglected.

I am far from wishing to discuss the details of the operations of the combined armies, or to recall here the history of the Crimean war, which has had so many and such excellent military describers. But it is not easy for any one to relate the experiences of this war, without adverting to one of the most remarkable mystifications that have ever occurred in our century of telegraphs. The whole of Europe believed, after the battle on the Alma, in the news, sent by the Tartars, of the fall of Sebastopol, and it is worthy of mention, that even the Emperor of Austria was induced to congratulate the Governments of the Western Powers prematurely on this event.

Louis Napoleon was extremely pleased at this attention on the part of the Emperor of Austria, and, later on, after Sebastopol had really fallen, and the relations between Austria and France had become strained, he took it just as amiss when, at the right moment, and on the suitable occasion, the congratulations were not forthcoming.

This singular disappointment was all the more bitter, the more obstinately the defence of Sebastopol was afterwards carried on by the Russians, and the more bloody and lasting the battles became, which had to be fought for this fearful stronghold. The approaching winter and the spread of severe disease, the miserable condition of the troops, and the helpless-

ness of the Generals—all these things produced, during the next months of the war, such an abundance of distress and woe, that the very last spark of enthusiasm for this war was bound to be extinguished. In its stead, there arose, in France especially, a deep hatred against those Powers who, in their alliance against Russia, had behaved doubtfully, like Prussia, or hesitatingly like Austria, and had thus, according to the opinion of the Western populations, caused the thousand-fold misery on the Crimean Peninsula.

A few days after the battle on the Alma, St Arnaud died, and General Canrobert assumed the chief command of the French army. The English took up their position in the Bay of Balaclava, the French in that of Camiesch, and the regular siege of Sebastopol now began on the south side of Sebastopol. On the 17th of October, fire was opened on the fortress from the fleet and from the land, but it had by no means the desired effect, which was to render possible an attack by storm.

When, on the 25th of October, Mentschikoff, who had been continually reinforced by the arrival of fresh troops, attacked the English at Balaclava, the Russians remained master of the field. Only the tremendous battle at Inkerman, on the 25th of November, enabled the allies to secure their positions for the long and severe winter, during which the situation became, in a military respect, the most unfavourable that could be imagined. The besieging army of the allies was almost entirely shut in from the land by a very numerous Russian army, and could only protect itself by means of tremendous entrenchments and ditches, which themselves made the impression of a fortress that, in its turn, had to be besieged by the Russians.

In England, the utter unsoundness of the military arrangements of the great kingdom were at last beginning to be recognised. Indeed, nothing was perhaps more indicative of the insufficiency of its forces for a great undertaking, than the following calculations with regard to the troops employed by England, which my brother, in order to some extent to vindicate the English Government, drew up, after Sebastopol had fallen, ‘As to our army, I will

only mention, that we began the war in the Crimea with 25,000 men and 35 guns, and after losing nearly our whole army in the winter, have *now* (in November 1855), 51,000 men with 94 cannon and 4000 cavalry on the spot, who will be in first-rate condition by next spring.'

Hence, it may be said that the English Government was just two years behindhand with its military measures, and that the Crimean campaign, which had been undertaken in September, 1854, unfortunately with but too little preparation, ought not to have been commenced until the spring of 1856. Meanwhile, however, the allied Powers had uselessly sacrificed their troops in the land of the ancient Scythini, and, with a patience that would have been worthy of a better cause, had been obliged to inform European newspaper readers of heroic deeds which, though by no means inferior to those of the mediæval crusades, could only be regarded by our realistic age as quite as imprudent as those of Louis the Holy against the Mamelukes. I used sometimes to rouse my brother's opposition at that period, by making remarks of a similar nature in my letters to him. But his own accounts certainly left little room for any other view; as, for instance, when he wrote, at the end of November, 1854, when the armies were only at the beginning of their horrible sufferings:

'I owe you an answer to your kind lines of the 10th. But I am little disposed for writing, for I have but *one* thought, and that is with *our heroes* in the Crimea. The poor fellows are suffering much, and behaving admirably. At Inkerman 6000 English resisted for two hours, then altogether 8000 for four hours, and when at last reinforced by 6000 French—these 14,000 all in all nine hours—a storm of 60,000 Russians, and repulsed them. The Russian dead, whom we had to bury, amounted to 4500! Multiply by 5, as is customary, in order to ascertain the number of the wounded, and there results that these 14,000 men put 15-20,000 of the enemy hors de combat: a unique fact in the history of warfare. Unfortunately, we also, as is but natural, have suffered enormously, for the Russians had brought sixty cannon against us, and a steamer with mortars. George (the Duke of Cambridge) behaved excellently; poor

Seymour is wounded in the hand ; Gordon got off ; Sir George Cathcart is our greatest loss.

‘Our operation cannot properly be termed a siege, for we ourselves are besieged by a stronger army than our besieging army, and the town is quite open in the north towards the sea, with a large fleet sunk in it, whilst in the east, towards the land, it is in connection with the relieving army.’

And, on the 26th of December, my brother gave a description of the sad state of things, which is in a certain measure only a continuation of the foregoing letter.

‘The accounts from Sebastopol contain nothing but *many sufferings* of the poor troops. All communications are rendered quite impossible by the total breaking up of the soil. But this must be the same with the enemy, and must embarrass him still more.

‘Since the 5th of November, the Russian army has given no sign of life. It has now retreated by way of Tschernaya, and is gathering on the north side of the port. As soon as our new guns are in position, the firing will commence again. But meanwhile the Russians have been making enormous efforts in erecting further defences in the interior, and they possess a great number of guns.’

The military extremity in which the English were placed, caused a project to ripen, in the course of the winter, which is scarcely remembered to-day, but which is extremely characteristic of the state of things which existed in those days. The idea was conceived of organising a foreign legion, and of enlisting, for this purpose, chiefly German soldiers, as in the times of the North American rising in the last century.

The strangest thing was, moreover, that the measure was very unpopular in England, and that, as Albert wrote on the 30th of December, it was conceived as a mark of ingratitude towards the brave army in the Crimea. My brother complained to me, that the matter was regarded as the ‘notion’ of a foreigner, and that there was some inclination to make him responsible for it.

In a somewhat later letter, in which the successful equipment of the Foreign Legion is reported, my brother writes

characteristically enough of the modern desertion of German and Swiss subjects :

‘I will only say one word about the Foreign Legion, which will interest you. We have seen 3408 under arms at Shorn-cliff, and were very satisfied, both with their bearing, and with their spirit. The English uniform stood in singular contrast with the German faces, but was decidedly better made than usual. The Germans consist of a complete battalion of riflemen under Colonel Schroer, and two still incomplete battalions of the line, one under Major Aller, the other under Colonel Woolridge. The Swiss battalion is under Colonel Sulzberger. The German legion is under Colonel von Stutterheim. The organisation under Colonel Rinloch.’

Meanwhile, the general dissatisfaction, uncertainty, and anxiety, with regard to the political and military situation, had produced, at the beginning of the year 1855, its long anticipated effect on the stability of the Aberdeen Ministry. In consequence of a motion of Mr Roebuck in Parliament for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the management of the war in the Crimea, Russell left the Ministry, since he did not want to resist his colleagues with Lord Aberdeen. The coalition which had been kept together with so much difficulty, at once fell to pieces, and, after a vote of censure against the Ministry had been carried with a large majority, on the 29th of January, the resignation of the whole Ministry was announced on the 1st of February.

The forming of the new Cabinet was attended with great difficulties, as both Russell and Derby declined to undertake it. Thus it became necessary to call Palmerston, who entered on his first Ministry on the 8th of February. The Queen and my brother were anything but pleased, when matters took this turn, but, thanks to the good relations existing between the Emperor of the French and the new Premier, at least the coherence of the great alliance was placed beyond the dangers of petty frictions and misunderstandings, which had become more and more unavoidable, owing to the unfortunate course of affairs in the East.

In Paris, all enthusiasm had long cooled down, since the

battle of Inkerman. '*Les nouvelles d'Orient sont toujours sombres,*' was the everlasting refrain of the accounts sent to me from the Tuileries. '*Paris est triste, le gouvernement très occupé de la cherté des grains.*' The Emperor himself grew more and more disappointed at the attitude of the German Powers. The war with Russia gradually appeared to him as an intolerable and resultless burden. Ideas of the most varied description crossed one another in his mind. When, in December, Princess Lieven, whose Russian business-zeal was well enough known, asked his permission to return to Paris, and, in doing so, wrote expressly, '*que la France et la Russie ne resteraient pas longtemps brouillées,*' he answered with more than customary politeness, and her return was generally regarded as the sign of *une tendance conciliatrice*. Between the Tuileries and the Palais Royal the relations became very strained, '*et chaque jour,*' so Prince Chimay concluded his account of the 18th of December, '*grandit le danger de la revision de la carte européenne.*'

However, little attentions on the part of Austria, such as the delivery of the insignia of the Order of St Stephen, softened the impatience of the Emperor, whose bad state of health was giving rise to the desire in his family to see the future of Bonapartism and the succession secured by law. This latter circumstance was scarcely calculated to increase the concord between the Emperor and his relations. When Prince Napoleon returned from the Crimea, he openly opposed the policy of the Government, and preached against the war with Russia and the alliance with Austria. Public feeling appeared to applaud him. The financial resources of the Empire were gradually becoming exhausted, and the opposition papers took an especial delight in calculating the enormous costs of the war. Even Prince Chimay asserted, in one of his reports, that the Crimean army swallowed three million francs a-day.

Doubtless, all France wished, as quickly as possible, to obtain an honourable peace. Under these circumstances, the negotiations with Sardinia were accelerated, which, on the 26th of January, led to the conclusion of the well-known treaty,

according to which Austria's most dangerous neighbour joined the great alliance with 15,000 men. It was not without great apprehension that this turn in the policy of the Emperor Napoleon was watched in Vienna, where this fresh step appeared to prove that Napoleon had by no means gone back from the ideas expressed by him at the beginning of the war.

The situation grew more and more complicated and strained, and, if the intentions of the Emperor Nicholas in accepting the four points had only been to some extent honest, peace would probably have been concluded by the harassed Western Powers in February, without the fall of Sebastopol. This was also the opinion of my brother, who wrote to that effect to King Leopold, on the 20th of January, 1855. I received a copy of his letter at the time, and believe that it indicates the deep desire for peace on the part of the Western Powers more plainly than many other documents, which, destined for public perusal, only too easily produced the belief that the Western Powers would never have determined to end this uncertain and grievous war, before Sebastopol had been taken.

'MOST GRACIOUS UNCLE,—Nobody believes here in Russia's honesty in accepting our interpretation of the four points. A comparison of her acceptance with Nesselrode's despatches to Gortschakoff, on the 26th of August, is the chief justification of our mistrust. In those despatches, the four points were rejected, because they were not to be interpreted "otherwise" than we have since then interpreted them, and it is said that Russia would only agree to them, if she were *in extremis*, and even then only temporarily, seeing that she would not be able to maintain such a peace.

'Therefore, we have Nesselrode's own words for it, that we are not to trust him. Moreover, Russia has a great interest in disturbing the completion of our alliance with Austria, and preventing that State from taking any active measures. If, at the conference, she is able to expose any differences of opinion between Austria and the Western

Powers, it will also be possible for her to separate us. Indeed, she might by-and-by draw Austria herself over to her side, especially if she were able to bring Prussia into the conference, which she is now endeavouring to do by every means in her power. Then they would be three against two, and our position would be greatly endangered. This appears to us to be the sole object of Russia's present acceptance, and Austria already shows considerable dishonesty.

'Westmoreland and Bourqueney were fooled by Buol into not drawing up a protocol of the first conference, so that it has never been recorded what Russia really accepted. Buol privately accepted a memorandum from Gortschakoff, which Westmoreland and Bourqueney had refused, and in the despatch in which he gives his version of the conference, he now speaks of the memorandum as practically quite in unison with the interpretation of the three Powers, whereas it contains *everything* against which we have been carrying on war

'I sum up therefore: I do not believe in Russia's honest intention to make peace, but I do believe that the greatest danger for the rest of Europe consists in the possible success of Russian intrigue in separating Austria again from the Western Powers. *If it should turn out differently, I shall be quite content. If Russia intends honestly to carry out the interpretation of the four points, then PEACE IS MADE.*

'ALBERT.

'WINDSOR CASTLE, *January 20, 1855.*'

At that time, affairs in Paris wore a no less desperate aspect. Hardly anyone was any longer inclined to set himself up as the defender of this unfortunate war, except the Turkish Ambassador, Vely Pasha, who made use of the carnival in order to inspire society, at balls and evening parties, with courage and hope for the speedy fall of Sebastopol. When, a few days later, the Duke of Cambridge returned from the Crimea, and stayed some time in Paris, people were astonished to hear all the worst accounts which Prince Napoleon has already given, confirmed.

'*Le Duc de Cambridge,*' Chimay wrote, '*est arrivé à Paris*

exaspéré contre son gouvernement, découragé et décourageant à l'excès. Il a presque reproché à Lady Cowley d'avoir laissé partir son fils pour l'exposer inutilement à des périls sans gloire.'

The misfortunes and the inactivity of the armies could not fail to produce certain dissensions between the allies, which, even in the remarks of Louis Napoleon, became every day more bitterly evident. In spite of our having agreed that our whole correspondence should be carried on through Prince Chimay, the Emperor had, already during the summer, occasionally written me little notes, which, however, were mostly confined to courtesies and references to what he had commissioned Chimay to write to me. But a somewhat longer letter of the middle of February was very characteristic of the situation in general, and of the mood of the Emperor in particular :

UILERIES, le 16 Février, 1855.

MON COUSIN,—J'ai bien des excuses à vous demander pour ne pas vous avoir répondu plus tôt. Mais j'espérais vous apprendre quelque chose de définitif sur nos transactions diplomatiques ; cela traîne si longtemps que je ne veux pas tarder plus longtemps à vous exprimer ma reconnaissance des preuves d'amitié que vous ne cessez de me donner. Votre dernière lettre était un chef d'œuvre de bon sens ; aussi en ai-je communiqué quelques passages à l'Empereur de l'Autriche, qui m'a répondu une lettre très aimable, mais où il exprime sa confiance dans la paix.

Le roi de Prusse paraît revenu à de meilleurs sentiments, et M. de Wedell est ici avec l'espoir de signer un traité.

J'ai reçu de bonnes nouvelles de Crimée, mais ce qui a rendu ce siège interminable c'est le défaut d'énergie dans le chef de l'armée anglaise. Après quatre mois d'attente, ils n'ont pas pu terminer leurs travaux de siège qui étaient dirigés vers la partie la plus importante, et quoique nous leur donnions tous les soins possibles en leur ouvrant nos magasins, en leur portant leurs malades et leurs munitions leur donnant même du pain, Lord Stratford à Constantinople joue tous les tours possibles !

‘Enfin j'espère que tout va mieux aller avec Lord Palmerston. L'impératrice me charge de la rappeler au souvenir de Votre Altesse

Royale, et moi je vous prie de croire aux sentiments de haute estime et d'amitié avec lesquels je suis votre bon cousin,

L. NAPOLEON.

The expectations which were attached to the mission of M. de Wedell in Paris, and which the Emperor, as may be seen from the foregoing letter, appeared to share, were not realised. Though the King of Prussia was ready to conclude a firm alliance with the Western Powers, on the basis of the four points, such as Austria, on her part also, had independently entered into, on the 2nd of December, Wedell had neither orders regarding the interpretation of the four points, which were at that moment after all principally in question, nor was he himself able to make any decided declarations on the subject. Hence I received, on the 2nd of February, from several sides, the news that the attempted understanding between the Western Powers and Prussia had again met with difficulties. And, in accordance with these facts, it was reported to me from Frankfort, that the conviction had now taken root, that Prussia would never, and under no circumstances, draw her sword against Russia.

At this date, the position of affairs had been altered by the death of the Emperor Nicholas, and the determination of King Frederick William to again break off the alliance with the Western Powers, which he had been seeking and wishing for since the beginning of February, was in great part due to this unexpected event in St Petersburg, which had powerfully stirred the feelings of the Prussian family.

The Emperor Nicholas died at a moment, when he had just made the attempt, by sending fresh troops to the Crimea, once for all to put a war-like end to all proposals of peace, and all idle interpretations of the four points. On the 10th of February, the Emperor had ordered a general arming of the Russian nation. He believed that he was able to face the terrors of the winter better than the Western Powers, and repeatedly called upon his Generals in the Crimea to take the offensive.

On the 16th of February, General Wrangel actually

attempted to make an attack on Eupatoria, but was repulsed; whereupon Omer Pasha sallied forth with his army, and pursued the Russians. The Turks were thus credited with a fresh, though very doubtful, success and victory over the Russian enemy. The Emperor was already in failing health, when he received this vexatious news.

With regard to his diplomatic action, even the slightest military failure was an irremediable injury. Urged more and more by Austria, and now too by Prussia, to give a loyal and pacific interpretation to the four points, which had already been accepted by him in principle, nothing but a fortunate and decided change of the military situation in the Crimea could deliver him from his political extremity. Hence it is easy to explain how the saying could gain currency, that the Emperor Nicholas had died of disappointed hopes. A modern English historian finds Schiller's words with reference to Max Piccolomini applicable to him: They say he wished to die.

More correct and to the point, according to the information I then had, was the opinion that the Emperor, in order to raise the military spirit of the country and the population in every way, had devoted himself personally with particular zeal to all military duties.

The Emperor Nicholas had always belonged to those rulers who set the highest value on the punctual observance of all forms of the service in times of peace. He always looked upon the military parade as the school of the soldier, and it was therefore only consistent, if he doubled these efforts of his in time of war. It is the custom in St Petersburg for the Emperor, on certain Sundays, to hold the so-called parade of orderlies. He was already very unwell on Sunday the 26th of February, when, in spite of the remonstrances of his physicians, he insisted on fulfilling this physically fatiguing duty. From the parade, he first drove in an open sledge to visit a lady friend. By the time he had returned home, he was already seized with high fever. The doctors recognised a severe affection of the lungs, and on Thursday, the 2nd of March, he was dead. The impression produced throughout

all Europe by the news of the death of this much-feared man, was very great, but nowhere, as I was only too well able to judge, more heartfelt and sincere than at the Prussian Court.

In the diplomatic negotiations, which were now begun with a new zest, the third of the famous four points was the subject of strenuous resistance on the part of the new Sovereign. The idea of giving way with regard to Russia's position in the Black Sea, or the sacrificing of the Russian fleet and the razing of the fortifications of Sebastopol, could not be whispered as yet in St Petersburg.

On the 15th of March, new conferences were opened in Vienna. Prussia had been excluded from them, which put the King in a violent passion. My brother, as is well known, endeavoured to represent this measure to the King as a necessary consequence of his vacillating behaviour, but Frederick William IV—this may be said—never got over the heavy blow of his exclusion from the March and April conferences.

However, the excessively harsh treatment of Prussia did not bring the Western Powers the golden fruits they had promised themselves from it. The Vienna Conferences were carried on with infinite secrecy. For a long time, nothing was heard of the proceedings, and still less of the results. It was only known that, at the first Conferences, a further specification of the four points had taken place, and that Lord Russell had shown himself very obliging, whilst Bourqueney, dreaming of the glory still to be acquired by France, maintained a studious reserve.

Soon, however, a great change occurred in the concert of the Powers. Austria suddenly declared herself quite incapable of agreeing with the Western Powers in a stricter interpretation of the third of the four points, respecting the question of the Russian active forces in the Black Sea. The result was a complete split in the camp of the allies of the 2nd of December. Russian policy could not have experienced a happier hour.

Even if the Emperor Alexander II had been firmly resolved on making peace, he could scarcely have let this fine opportunity escape, to insist, under the given circumstances, on the

full maintenance of his power in the Black Sea. I will not recapitulate here all the proposals which were made on various sides with regard to the solution of this question.

Thanks to a series of publications on the subject, nearly every one of the many useless words which were exchanged by the representatives of the four Great Powers in Vienna, is now known. The secret was strictly kept at the time, and only a few stray accounts arrived from Paris, according to which the relations of the Western Powers to Austria had become very strained.

‘As might have been foreseen,’ my brother wrote to me on the 5th of April, ‘Austria is leaving us in the lurch on the third point, after having got the first and second decided in accordance with her particular interests, and not exactly in favour of the West. She now declares that she does not see any *casus belli* in the fact of Russia’s not consenting to some practical means or other *pour faire cesser sa prépondérance dans la mer noire*. But this was just in question, and the idea of providing a counterpoise, by condemning England, for all time to come, to keep a navy equal to her whole present war-navy in the Black Sea, is too absurd to require any illustration.

‘Besides, we should have to take away important towns and territories from the Turks, build large fortresses and war-ports, arsenals, etc., etc., and be continually passing with our fleets before the windows of the poor Sultan’s Serail.

‘The proposal may be likened to the following example: A horde of robbers threaten a house, and attack it. The inhabitants and the neighbours come out to defend it. After heavy blows peace is to be made, and is to consist not in the robbers remaining posted in front of the house, but in their *permitting* the inhabitants to pass the rest of their lives as sentries in front of their own houses.’

The situation in Vienna was still the same as I had found it the year before. One part of the more influential men, at their head Field-marshal von Hess, was always expecting the ultimate conclusion of the alliance with the Western Powers. The other part was still friendly disposed

towards Russia, and, more particularly since Lord Palmerston had become Premier, extremely distrustful towards England. This tendency had been considerably strengthened by Baron Bruck, who was now assuming the Ministry of Finance, after having so frequently proved himself hostile to English influence in the East. Of Bach it was said, that the days of his ministry were numbered, and Buol was, properly speaking, always moving in a circle of busy activity, like the advancing horse in the tread-mill. An excellent illustration of this movement, which never stirs from the spot, is afforded by one of his letters, written to me on the 24th of April, and in which he attempts to explain the attitude of Austria.

‘MOST SERENE DUKE, . . . Perhaps I have not been altogether wrong in not availing myself of Your Highness’s permission before, as the really critical moment, which will in all probability decide the issue of the Peace Conferences, is only now awaiting us.

‘My Emperor has the great purpose in view of overcoming this crisis by means of the alliance with France and England, without exposing the world to the consequences of a general shock to the existing system of the States. The means to this end lie simply and solely in the loyal and complete carrying out of the programme of the four points. This programme has been drawn up in the interest of Europe. Austria has bound herself to it, but to nothing else, and the events of the war render no new demands necessary.

‘Austria cannot renounce her own judgment on the difficult third point, nor can she allow war to be dictated to her. But the Emperor, my most gracious Sovereign, has said to himself, that he will rather be too severe against Russia, than not sufficiently just towards the Western Powers, and in the conditions we are willing to lay down, we are going far enough, to be able to declare fearlessly before all the world that we are honestly, and in spite of every danger, redeeming our pledged word.

‘Lord John Russell, who started yesterday on his return journey, will not be able to deny us this acknowledgment in

his conscience; in fact, he has led us to hope that he will speak in England in favour of the solution which we have proposed. Minister Drouyn de l'Huys also shows himself personally inclined to it.

‘There may be room for dispute as to the value of the different systems of neutralisation, limitation, and counterpoise, of the Powers in the Black Sea, but they all contain a decided victory of general interests over Russian ambition. We desire this victory, as much as England and France do. We do not undervalue the greatness of the sacrifices which have been made by these Powers, and we wish to give Russia no pretext for saying that her opponents are not aiming at guarantees of peace, but at humiliating her, and at continuing the war.

‘When Your Highness is initiated into the particulars, you will give the preference to one or the other system, but you will certainly not find the difference great enough to be seriously weighed against such essential aims as the re-establishment of the peace of the world and the continuation of our alliance with the West. If people in England and France allow themselves to be carried away by motives of self-love to continue the war in opposition to our opinion, then I certainly foresee, not only the material, but the moral, triumph of Russia.

‘How much better would the future present itself, supposing England and the Emperor Napoleon were to content themselves with just and moderate conditions, and remain peacefully united with us, for the purpose of watching that such conditions were properly fulfilled. After all, the true counterpoise against the growth of Russia’s power only lies in the *permanence* of this system of alliances, which has been called forth by Russia’s encroachments; and both Prussia, in spite of all her vacillations, and the German Courts, in spite of all their desire for Russian protection, must, in the course of time, necessarily join this system.

‘The opinion and the advice of Your Highness, listened to at this moment by your illustrious relatives in England, are certainly calculated to produce a great impression, and Your

Highness will lay the Emperor and all Germany under a great obligation, if you contribute towards winning opinions in favour of an honest peace, established under the auspices of the Imperial Power.

‘I regret that I am not able to submit to Your Highness all the particulars of the negotiations. I should then be better able to defend my thesis. Filled with gratitude for the honour of Your Highness’s confidence and friendly sentiments, I beg for their continuance, and remain, with the sincerest respect, my most gracious Duke,

‘Your Highness’s

‘devoted and humble servant,

‘COUNT VON BUOL.

‘VIENNA, *April* 24, 1855.’

The language which, as is seen, Austria was beginning to employ, was such as was not likely to prove successful, either in France, or in England. I may honestly say, and if I were not afraid of fatiguing the reader by producing further documentary evidence, I could prove it by numerous letters, that I really and actually endeavoured, both in Paris and in London, to gain at least some sort of ground for the Austrian view. But I did so at the time with slight hopes of success; for what, after all, in face of the national excitement which prevailed everywhere, were the two Western Powers engaged in this costly war, to think of an empty phrase like this: that, under the auspices of the Austrian Imperial power, peace should be established, and a rotten peace to boot!

It was not to be denied, that the favourable political situation, and more particularly the circumstance that Prussia had so completely retired into the back-ground, could lead Austria into assuming a tone, as if she were once more in a position to settle all Europe, East and West, in the old Metternichian style. Unfortunately, this pretty dream had no other effect than that of calling forth, in Paris and London, a feeling of extreme dissatisfaction with Austria.

The Emperor Napoleon, who had just been entertaining the plan of going to the Crimea himself, and, if possible, putting

an end to the war, before the 15th of May, now attached himself with renewed enthusiasm to England and her national aspirations in the East. Since the end of March, he had been planning a visit to the English Royal Family, in company with the Empress, and, in April, he quickly and energetically carried out his idea. The French thus obtained a new proof of the hearty accord existing between their Emperor and the popular and powerful Royal House of England, and the diplomatic world of Europe saw the alliance against overbearing Russia cemented afresh.

On the 16th of April, the Emperor and the Empress of France arrived in Dover, where Prince Albert was awaiting them, and, for a succession of brilliant days, they were almost uninterruptedly fêted and loaded with honours and distinctions by the Court and the English nation. If my brother had already altered his opinion of Napoleon, after his stay in Boulogne in the previous autumn, the Queen was now likewise changed. The diaries of the Queen, as is well known, are full of her delight with the Emperor, and the beautiful Eugenie now appears as having 'the most perfect manner ever seen—so gentle and graceful, and kind, her courtesies so charming, and so modest and retiring withal.'*

At the great conference, which was held in the Emperor's room, on the 18th of April, at 11 o'clock, and at which Prince Albert drew up the protocol, the vigorous continuation of the war, and the taking of Sebastopol at any price, was decided upon, but the Emperor was urgently dissuaded from proceeding to the Crimea himself. The news of this decision brought the enthusiasm of the English to its highest pitch.

However, in spite of the overflowing delight which spoke out of all the English and French accounts, of the happy harmony between the Royal and Imperial parties, the actual position of affairs had by no means been regarded in a rosy light. Although the change in the Chief Command of the French army, where Pelissier had taken the place of Canrobert, had been very favourably received at the seat of war, the almost simultaneous replacing of Drouyn de l'Huys by Count

* Diary of the Queen in 'The Life of the Prince Consort' III, 245.

Walewski at the head of the French Cabinet, was regarded in England as a mistake on the part of the Emperor. And whilst the foreign diplomacy of the Western Powers had nothing but defeats to record, the parliamentary debates in London assumed from day to day a more unfavourable and confused aspect. It is a sad picture, which the sharp pen of my brother, in striking contrast to the festivities of the Imperial visit, had occasion to draw, only a few days later, on the 1st of May:

‘By the entry of our light draught steam flotille into the Sea of Azof, we are enabled to confine the Russian Commissariat lines to the road of Perecop, and to push forward to the Don, and break up, or destroy, their large corn magazines on the way. By this means, their troops in the Crimea will be reduced to a quantity, which we shall be quite able to cope with. In General Pelissier, the French have at last a leader again who is determined and enterprising, and who will once more raise the spirit of the French army, which has sunk through Canrobert’s mildness. The English troops are again 30,000 men under arms, and their spirit is excellent.

‘In proportion as the condition of the army is satisfactory, the aspect of diplomatic affairs is bad. Austria will probably establish her own shame in the face of all Europe. The new French Ministry is as incapable as was to be expected from . . . Walewski, and the position of the Emperor is extremely unpleasant. Here, everybody appears desirous to contribute his share towards making all government impossible. Lord Derby and the Protectionists wanted to make *cause commune* with Layard and Associates, for the purpose of overthrowing Palmerston’s Ministry. Beaten in the Upper House, owing to the clumsiness of Lord Ellenborough, who was to lead the assault there, Disraeli is now renewing the attack in the Lower House. There, Gladstone and the Peelites are taking up the cry for peace, declaring themselves against all further continuation of the war, and putting on Aberdeen and his ex-colleagues all the blame for the former bad and feeble management of the war, for which the public has so long been seeking a scapegoat.

‘Disraeli, who had been chiefly endeavouring to injure Lord

John, and had attacked his pacific policy in Vienna, and the uncertain spirit of Palmerston's Cabinet, is now enabled, with the support of the whole liberal and patriotic party, to set everybody against the Peelites. Palmerston gets a great majority, but is now compelled to resort to extreme measures of war, and is freed from all control, which might force him to be moderate in his foreign policy. All this while, the Russian party in Europe have been enabled to use the utterances of the most eminent English statesmen for their own purposes, and to represent the war as a mere battle of wild passions against Russia. But everybody has been outstripped by Lord Grey, who, revelling in the delight of contradicting the whole House of Lords, and perhaps the whole world, has made a motion, in which he goes so far as to approve even of Mentschikoff's mission and the invasion of the Principalities. The Vienna Conferences, which it would have been better to leave open, must now be closed, were it only for the sake of obtaining peace for the Ministry in Parliament.

‘ Oh ! Oxenstirn, Oxenstirn ! ’

The conferences in Vienna had closed, in fact, on the 26th of April. At the last moment, after Lord Russell had departed on the 23rd, Gortschakoff almost tauntingly made the motion that the Black Sea should be entirely closed to all the Powers, and that the Sultan alone should have the authority to open the Straits to every fleet, whenever weighty circumstances made it appear necessary to him. In Austria, this was looked upon as concealing some sinister design against her particular interests, so Count Buol rejected the proposal, to which Gortschakoff had attached a declaration, saying that he was about to leave the Conference, as all his motions had been rejected.

Prussia's behaviour now appeared justified, for the moment, by the unfavourable issue of the Vienna Conferences, but she had neither got over the mortification she had suffered by being excluded from them, nor was she inclined to take advantage of a situation which was so much more favourable to

her views, in order, by an energetic attitude, to restore her lost influence. The circumstance that the Conferences ended without any result, produced in Germany nothing but a fresh revival of Russian sympathies, and all those who for some time had had to impose considerable restraint upon themselves, now began again to side openly with Russia.

The Prussian Court, however, even during the crisis of the Vienna April Conferences, had not for one moment got beyond the phase of hesitation and leaning towards both parties. I intended going to Paris and London, in the beginning of May, in order to gain some information about the situation, which was in a state of confusion all round, and to see whether it would not be possible again, like the year before, to bring about a better understanding between the leading monarchs. I communicated my determination to the King and the Prince of Prussia, and, by reviving the correspondence between Frederick William IV and my brother, succeeded in softening the somewhat strained relations between these two men.*

‘How kind and good you were,’ the King answered on the 28th of April, 1855, on the announcement of my journey, ‘to send Treskow to me with so welcome a letter. If my physical condition, which has been somewhat compromised by a very effective use of the Kreuzbrunnen, and by a great deal of drilling, permits it, I shall accept your kind offer with a thousand thanks, and write the dear precious Queen a little letter. May God conduct you safely over sea and land, dearest Duke!

‘I beg Your Highness to make no secret, on the other side of the Channel, of the fact that the English Ministry has insulted me *personally*, seeing that, in return for the certainty, worth a hundred millions, of *having Prussia for and not against it*, it would not even do me the small favour of inviting Prussia to the Peace Congress. But I would have overlooked that, if it were not that a slight had thus been put upon Prussia’s crown and honour. And such a slight I neither may nor will, neither can nor shall put up with.’

* Martin, ‘Life of the Prince Consort,’ III, chapters 63 and 64, may to some extent be supplemented by what follows.

The answer of the Prince of Prussia was also clear and decided, and his representation of the state of affairs in Berlin, as will always be perceived, deserves to be cited as a pattern of truthful and honest political criticism.

‘BERLIN, *the 28th of April*, 1855.

‘I give you my best thanks for your letter, received to-day through Treskow. Much as I envy you your journey to London, I understand very well why you are not this time travelling through Berlin.

‘The prospects of peace, which you gather from some letter from Buol, do not agree with to-day’s news here, which represents the Conference of the day before yesterday as having ended without any result. Count Buol, in his letter to you, probably *hoped* more from that conference. Whether Austria, in face of the breaking up of the Conferences, is already firmly resolved to take active measures, is not to be ascertained as yet.

‘You say Russia should now win . . . by means of small concessions. In what these concessions are to consist, I am at a loss to see, since the chief demand, the reduction of the fleet, can hardly be reckoned to the small ones, the less so, as *nothing* has happened, up till now, which *forces* Russia to bring such a sacrifice.

‘But I must still regard *this* demand as unfair, *before* a decisive victory, as I have often written to you and your brother. On the other hand, the Russian counter-proposals are so elastic, that they, too, cannot be agreed to. But, if there had been some *bonne volonté*, the parties would surely have met half-way, for it is an old principle that all proposals are made in such a way as to leave something to be conceded by negotiations.

‘What I look to most, is that the peace which is to be concluded, should give Russia a political lesson, which will restrain her, for the present, from repeating the same thing over again. This I find attained in the three accepted points. The fourth (third), as the chief point, could have been attained, in my opinion, by the allies securing strong positions in the Black Sea. These nose-pincers for Russia would have been a

great annoyance to her, when the straits were opened, and the costs to the allies do not come into account, in face of the result to be attained. Will not the costs, even if only occurring once (though they may possibly continue still for years to come), be immense, if the war is continued, in order, *by* the war, to obtain nothing more than what is fair?

‘However, you know well enough, that I do not desire a peace that will ultimately cause Russia’s *wrong* to *triumph*. I therefore keep to my opinion, that we others must not lose sight of this, that Russia should never, even indirectly, be enabled to gain the victory in this contest, because then the tables would be turned, and Russia would dictate peace to us! This will happen, however, if the allies are not relieved by a diversion on the part of Austria in Bessarabia. But Austria will not be able to make this diversion, unless Prussia secures her left flank against Paskievitch. Neither of the German Great Powers, however, will resolve on taking active measures, if the Western Powers make such exorbitant demands as the reduction of the fleet. Thus one thing paralyses the other, and I see no end to it.

‘The fortnight’s bombarding will lead to nothing before Sebastopol. At *such* distances, no practicable breaches are fired. The terror of the bombardment is *nil*, if there are no inhabitants. The munition must be exhausted again, as it was on the 17th of October, consequently things are no farther than they were then. This is a sad supposition!

‘Who knows what will happen in the four weeks of your absence.

‘Your faithful friend,

‘WILLIAM.’

I had fixed the 4th of May for my departure for Paris and London. But, as the King was attacked by a fever, which prevented him from working for some length of time, I only received the letter he had promised me for the Queen of England, subsequently in London, through the Prussian Ambassador Count Bernstorff. The King added the following

postscript to the few lines which accompanied his letter to Queen Victoria.

‘My letter to Her Majesty is very confidential. I shall feel greatly obliged to Your Highness, if you will do your best to prevent its getting abroad, that is, neither to Downing Street, nor to the “Tile-Kilns,” on the strand of the Sequana, *où l’on me veut infiniment de mal.—On ne comprend pas que le ridicule échafaudage qu’on nomme le royaume de Prusse (Madame la Marquise de Créqui) peut avoir un sentiment d’honneur et de dignité et faire paraître une volonté*

When I presented myself at the Tuileries to the Emperor and the Empress, on the 5th of May, I met with a reception friendly beyond all expectation, and I had the feeling that I should not lack some influence here, wherewith to further the establishment of a permanent peace and more intimate relations between Germany and the Western Powers. The Emperor and the Empress were still quite full of their visit to England. The unity and friendship of the allies were not only completely re-established, but had reached their summit.

The Emperor asked me, with reference to his newly strengthened relations to England, and not without an allusion to the triumphs he had enjoyed there, whether Germany was still as ill-advised as heretofore, and what was thought of the continuation of the war, which, owing to the duplicity of the German Powers, would never come to an end?

I answered, that, as to the majority of the nation, the fear of the Russian Colossus had by no means diminished, but that, owing to the clumsiness of the English Press, which took no account whatever of the difficult and sad circumstances of dismembered Germany, but chiefly continued to belabour her, the Western Powers had lost many sympathies. That, with many governments, the predilection for Russia had only grown stronger, and that the nation was averse to taking part in the war. In spite of all my personal feeling to the contrary, I observed, I could not shut my eyes to the fact that the moment for warlike action appeared to be past.

The Emperor then turned to the subject of Austria, and asked me, a little ironically, whether I was still of opinion that

she was prompted by sincere and honest intentions. I answered decidedly in the affirmative, and adduced all the reasons, with which I had become only too familiar, as to why she could not make up her mind to take offensive measures. He admitted every single point, and, summing up all my objections, added, with a sharp accent: *Enfin un manque de courage.*

The most surprising fact was, that the Emperor spoke of Prussia, quite in contrast to his judgment of Austria, in a tone of the greatest kindness. He was even now still, he added, *dans les meilleurs termes* with the King, although he was convinced that he would never be induced to take active measures. However, the King of Prussia was only uncertain in his resolutions, but he never made promises.

Napoleon had in his heart already completely broken with the Austrian alliance, and it was now manifestly merely a question with him of bringing the Russian war to a close honourable to the Western Powers. Nevertheless, he thought he ought to discuss theoretically, as it were, the chances of a great conflict with Russia. If the Russian Colossus was to be rendered harmless to Europe, he saw no other possibility of doing so than by restoring Poland. But, as the States adjoining Russia resisted such a project, all measures which aimed at humiliating Russia, appeared to him to be of ephemeral importance. For that reason, he said, Wedell's mission, well-meant as it had been in itself, had proved entirely fruitless. The King of Prussia had latterly shown the kind desire to approach France, but an alliance which had no definite purpose, would never signify anything in politics.

We then discussed the intrigues of the Russian party in Germany, and the very clever way in which the Russians had protracted and ended the conferences. The Emperor appeared to be still quite in the dark as to the means by which peace was to be obtained, and he characterised the situation before Sebastopol as one that would not be tenable for any length of time. Unless the fall of the fortress could be effected at an early date, the siege would have to be given up.

The Emperor was as dissatisfied as possible with the state

of political affairs, and his projects and plans were already roving about in quite other directions than in Eastern affairs. He spoke much of the merits of Sardinia, and enquired eagerly after the Augustenburgers. He had lately made the acquaintance of the Prince of Noer, with whom he was extremely pleased, and of whom he declared, that he had materially increased his interest in the rights of succession of the Augustenburgers.

I promised the Emperor to come to Paris again towards the autumn, after the opening of the International Exhibition, which was to take place shortly. I was in hopes, too, of seeing one of my operas performed there, in the course of the season.

I now first hastened to London, where I just arrived, as preparations were being made for the solemn distribution of the Crimean medals, which the Queen intended, for the first time, to deliver with her own hands to the brave soldiers: a touching and imposing ceremony, such as I have rarely seen the like. The enormous misery of the Crimean War was in those days, as it were, exposed to everybody's view, owing to the constant arrival of the wounded, the sick, and the convalescent. In Buckingham Palace, the invalids had been given a lunch, which almost entirely engrossed my brother, in heart still more than in mind, and at which all the heads of the army and of the public offices had appeared, to fête the heroes of the Crimean War.

In those stirring days, there was hardly any room left for the political business of the future. The uncertainty of the situation, and the complete helplessness with regard to the conclusion of peace, embittered all social pleasures. The violent conflict of parties in Parliament, the beginning decay of Palmerston's Cabinet, which was but a few weeks old, and the loud cry raised by the apostles of peace at the cruel and useless bloodshed, all this found its echo in the Royal Palace, where the fact could scarcely be concealed, that its inhabitants at bottom shared the same feeling, and were yet unable to advise, or do anything in the matter.

At the English Court, it was Prussia and her King on

whom the principal blame for the horrible situation was cast, whereas the feeling towards Austria appeared, quite in contrast to Paris, rather more mild and indulgent.

I delivered to the Queen the letter of Frederick William IV, the rather unofficial contents of which appeared to cause some uncertainty. A difficulty, which had already frequently occurred in the correspondence with the King, arose, as to whether, according to constitutional notions, the Ministry ought to be informed of the contents of the letter, or not. However, as the King had so expressly deprecated this, in the letter he addressed to me, and as no further mention was ever made of the letter, I must assume that the matter was never officially settled. What I was commissioned to communicate to the King myself, I still possess, in the draft of the letter which I addressed to His Majesty, and for which, therefore, an interest may be claimed, far exceeding any that may attach to my own personal opinion.

‘ May 21, 1855.

‘ MOST GRACIOUS KING!—Returned yesterday from my journey, I hasten at once to inform Your Majesty of the execution of the commission graciously entrusted to me. I delivered Your Majesty’s letter, which came to me through Count Bernstorff, to the Queen, who will shortly answer Your Majesty herself.

‘ The assurances of your unaltered sentiments of friendship, which you authorised me to make, find a lively echo in the hearts of the Queen and the Prince. Nor can I let this occasion pass, without mentioning that, in opposition to a passage in Your Majesty’s letter, the Emperor Napoleon also gave me to understand that he was *dans les meilleurs termes* with Your Majesty.

‘ On the political situation I write nothing. Your Majesty will be fully informed on that subject by Count Bernstorff, and by Herr von Usedom, who is still well-received in England. Your Majesty’s most gracious letter, however, obliges me to touch upon one point. I did not hesitate, according to your desire, to point out that the omission to

invite Your Majesty to the Vienna Conferences had necessarily offended you.

‘The reply was, that such had by no means been the intention of the allied Governments. It was only regretted, that Your Majesty’s Government had not made decided and positive proposals, which would have given the West the guarantee that Prussia, in her view of the situation, was on the same line with the allied Powers.

‘The prospect of peace has all but entirely vanished, owing to the fruitless dispute about limitation and counterpoise in the Black Sea. The war will be continued, but I have taken the glad hope away with me, that it will for the present be attended with no danger to our German fatherland. Its issue lies in the Black Sea. If it should be decided, and still no peace be established, the war would, of course, assume a more violent character and greater dimensions.

‘I should always be inclined to regard it as a fortunate circumstance, if at least North Germany were to approach the West under the shield of Your Majesty. It would be fortunate, too, for the time *after* the war, when it will after all be of the utmost consequence, if, in the inevitable event of fresh European differences, Prussia can lean her back against the island kingdom, with which she has been allied of old, both by race and by sympathy.

‘May Your Majesty rest assured, that, howsoever the immediate and the more distant future may shape itself, you will always find in me a Sovereign who knows how to appreciate Prussia’s importance to Germany. It is with sincere grief that I, as well as the English Royal Family, have learned that Your Majesty has lately been suffering in health. Heaven be praised that you are now restored again. With the best wishes for your welfare, I remain Your Majesty’s, etc.

‘ERNEST.

‘*P.S.*—The contents of Your Majesty’s letter to the Queen have, in accordance with your desire, been treated as strictly confidential.’

If I had succeeded, during my stay in London, in exercising

a not altogether disadvantageous influence on the relations of the Court to the King of Prussia, I had also gained the conviction, through my conferences with the English Ministers, that there was for the present no means of successfully contending with the deep feeling of bitterness which prevailed there against everything that was German, and above all Prussian. If Napoleon had, at that time, been inclined to turn the war-like action of the Western Powers against Germany and Prussia, he would not have met with much resistance in England.

The Ministers assured me, that the only reason why they did not like to attack Prussia, was because they were not possessed of the means to do so, and because they did not wish to carry on the war with Russia in Germany. They feared too, by complicating affairs, to excite 'the greed of their own allies.' As to non-Prussian Germany, there prevailed in England at that time a contempt, shared by all classes, such as I had not even met with during the period of the last revolution.

Still, I found, on the other side, in single English statesmen, and particularly in Lord Clarendon, a fertile soil to work for our national interests. I drew a faithful picture of the situation of our individual Governments; of the reaction, which was increasing with the increasing power of Russia; the certain ruin of all constitutional life; the ever growing alienation from all those views which were prized in England; and lastly of the danger which England would incur, if Germany, driven by her own Governments, were urged more and more towards the East. I attempted to explain the oppressed spirit of the German nation, as represented in its liberal and intelligent classes, in order to accentuate the necessity of England's re-awakening the national interest, and affording the liberal views a means of support.

I really succeeded, at the time, in obtaining from the English Ministry the promise of their energetic support of the cause I represented, and I was enabled to open up certain negotiations, to which I intend to advert again, later on, in another connection.

I will merely observe here, that, both with the English Government, and in Paris, the consciousness prevailed, that the diplomatic means of obtaining peace had been entirely exhausted. Nobody thought it possible to give way in the question of the Black Sea, nor had anybody a notion, how it would be possible once more to set the interrupted Vienna Conferences going.

The busy diplomacy of all the States concerned lapsed more and more into silence. Only Austria did not grow weary, but came forward once more, on the 4th of June, with a feeble proposal to leave the limitation of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea to be settled by a free agreement between the Turks and the Russians. But the Western Powers rejected the idea, as one little worthy of them, and Austria seized this opportunity to lay down her arms, recall her forces from Galicia, and thus enable the Russians to send strong divisions of troops from Poland to the Crimea.

Everybody in Europe now knew that the time for negotiating was over. Only the iron mouths of the cannons before Sebastopol still discussed the question, as to how the war was to be concluded, and the last fearful act of the drama took its course.

Of the exhaustion of the forces which were squandered in this war, the public had but a slight notion. A calculation of the losses, which reached me from official sources in Paris, says as follows: *Jusqu'au Juillet on a expédié pour l'Orient deux-cent-un mille et 500 hommes.*

Tués jusqu'au 1 Juillet trente-sept mille; renvoyés, blessés ou malades soixante-quatorze mille; mais ce qui est affreux c'est que sur ce dernier nombre trente-quatre mille sont morts.

If, on the other hand, the figure represented as official in the newspapers, spoke of 14,000 killed in the Crimean war, it is easy to conceive how my correspondent could say: *Le chiffre officiel des morts en Crimée provoque un sourire amer au Département de la guerre.*

But far more dreadful were the ravages which the war made in Russia, and amongst her naturally scanty population. I received in May a touching and very authentic picture of

the state of the Holy Empire of the Czar, from my brother-in-law William of Baden. His accounts, both of the political and the military situation, were so detailed, that I noted them down word for word, and, considering the ignorance which then prevailed in the West of Europe on everything concerning Russia, their very completeness will render them a noteworthy source of history.

I also brought them to my brother's notice, and wrote on the 31st of May, 1855:

‘My brother-in-law William is staying here since yesterday, and has given us the following interesting accounts, which I will not withhold from you. William had taken the usual overland route from the Prussian frontier to St Petersburg, and, after staying there for some length of time, returned by rail to Moscow, and from there by carriage home via Warsaw. I only mention his route, in order to show you that he passed just through all those districts of the Russian Empire, in which their immense forces are mustered.

‘The Imperial family, he says, were on the whole very pleasant. Politics, and the events of the war, were not talked of much in the Imperial circle itself. When this did happen, it was merely by way of a casual remark on the fidelity of Prussia and the infidelity of Austria. The other German States were alluded to with the greatest contempt: “They had no national feeling,” it was said. This is the more characteristic, as our German Sovereigns had expected praise from Russia for the attitude they had assumed.

‘The Court, however, and the higher military and State officials, expressed themselves in a louder key. An invincible hatred, and thirst for revenge, against England, was met with everywhere; but, on the other hand, the manifest intention to take the part of France and her Emperor. The French troops were praised beyond all measure, and regret expressed, unreservedly, that the Russians were not able to unite with them and attack Europe.

‘Although no positive enthusiasm for the war pervades all Russia, yet the national feeling is excited to the highest pitch. The forces of the nation, however, are likewise strained to the

very utmost. St Petersburg is said to have suffered little, as yet, through the blockade. In fact, the blockade itself is said to have been of little use, and to have merely contributed towards alienating the sympathies of the Fins from the allies.

‘As to the military operations and the forces mustered, my brother-in-law, in the first place, confirmed what we already knew here in Germany, from the secret reports sent to Berlin. The whole disposable force is distributed along the frontier. In the interior, as well as in St Petersburg and Moscow, only reserves remain, which are formed, partly of children, partly of old men, each company having but one officer, often none at all, but the equipment and baggage being excellent.

‘The corps of the Guards and Grenadiers, however, which stands in New and Old Poland, has, according to the lists which my brother-in-law himself has seen, already lost a third of its men through typhus and cholera, since it marched out, a fate which also the Austrian troops are meeting with in Galicia. It is said, that the famine has reached its highest pitch, and that people are frequently found starving to death in the streets.

‘Besides, all disposable provisions have been brought from Poland into the interior. It appears to be the intention of the Russian Government, to thoroughly weaken Poland, for fear that, should she be attacked by the allied Powers, it would be impossible to hold her. A fourfold conscription has already taken all the youths and men, who are capable of bearing arms, out of the country, and every weapon, down to the little hatchets and carvers of the wood-cutter, have been carried away. Many trades can, in consequence, scarcely be carried on any more. The state of things is said to be fearful. Notwithstanding, the Warsaw ladies still have the courage to wear mourning for their fatherland, in spite of Russian dominion.

‘William constantly found the fact confirmed, that Russia had not sent sufficient troops to the Crimea; indeed, that it was even supposed that the allies were numerically the stronger. The operations of the Russian army, it was said, had hitherto been so unfortunate, because the Russian commanders had

not been allowed, nor perhaps had they wished, to take sufficient responsibility on themselves. The chief management had always proceeded from St Petersburg. The fortifications of Warsaw and Modlin had now been completed, down to the smallest detail, and would probably only yield to an enormous army. This is also one of the reasons why Austria hesitated so much to take the offensive.

‘William’s views of Cronstadt, which he inspected *en detail*, quite accord with our own, that it is impossible to destroy and take it from the water side, but all the easier to blockade it. The Russian army, as it is now mustered, may altogether amount to 870,000 men, of course including the troops in the Caucasus and in Asia. There are alone 83 regular regiments of cossacks assigned to the army. The lack of officers is throughout extremely perceptible. The chief management is in the hands of old people, and men who are unfit for a long campaign.

‘Although the Emperor has the best will to continue to act with the wonted energy of his father, still, it can already be felt, it is said, how soon this force is likely to be crippled by the opposition which is beginning to germinate on all sides, at Court and in its immediate surroundings of course more than anywhere else. The death of the Emperor Nicholas has deprived the Colossus of his head. But the rest of the body is still dangerous enough.’

Only a fortnight afterwards, the latter unintentional prophecy was to find an infinitely sad verification at the seat of war in the Crimea. Since the middle of May, the French had been extending their trenches closer and closer to the Russian fortifications. On the 7th of June, they stormed the so-called Green Mamelon, and, on the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, the 18th of June, the Generals intended to execute the chief assault. But the day was to remain a day of misfortune for the French, nor had even the English any reason to look upon it as a day of honour. For, in spite of their most tremendous efforts, the attempt failed, with a loss of 5000 French and 1570 English. What the excellent Prince of Prussia, with an unfailing military eye, had already seen

some time before, from Berlin: 'At such great distances, no practicable breaches can be fired,' proved only too correct, on the day of the battle.

In London, the news of the intended storming of Sebastopol had been received on the evening of the previous day, the 17th. The anxiety, during the next few hours, was therefore just as boundless, as the disappointment and the dejection which followed, on the reception of the fatal news.

'You can imagine our and all London's state of mind,' my brother wrote on the 24th. 'In Paris there has not been a scrap of news since the 18th.'

People were already prepared for the very worst, when a fresh blow came, through the death of old Lord Raglan, who succumbed to the cholera on the 28th of June. In the pressure of the moment, no one could be suggested to fill his place but Lord Simpson, who was scarcely known, and could therefore awaken but little confidence. The effect of these terrible days of the war was long felt by the political portion of the English public.

Nothing but the fearful battle on the Tchernaja, on the 16th of August, was capable of giving fresh courage to the Western public, who had become accustomed to look on at the gladiatorial contest in the Crimea, like at a game in the circus. People were still busy reading the endless details of this bloody battle, which procured the victor scarcely the slightest advantage, when the allied armies were again preparing for a fresh storm on Sebastopol.

Since the 5th of September, the allies had kept up the fire out of eight hundred cannon of the heaviest calibre, uninterruptedly throughout four days and nights, and it was said that the bombardment alone cost the lives of 5000 Russians. The cannons had been run up so close to the walls, that nothing could resist them any more, and the Russian batteries were buried under the ruins of their own bastions. All the art, energy, and cunning, of Todleben, whose fortifications had defied the allies throughout a whole year, appeared to be at an end.

The Emperor Napoleon had already been informed,

towards the end of August, of the bad position of the defenders of Sebastopol. He was therefore able to write to Pelissier, that the Russian army would not remain master of the Crimea for another winter. When this letter was published in the *Moniteur*, on the 27th of August, it became a matter for surprise that the Emperor should have been able to refer in it to news which he declared to be positive.

Such news had, in fact, come to him via Berlin, where, at that time, the stealing of despatches was of such ordinary occurrence, that the French ambassador appears to have obtained easy possession of the reports of the Prussian military *attaché* in St Petersburg. As the latter, Count Munster, had been a great favourite at the Court of the Czar, his immediate reports to General von Gerlach were extremely well-informed and authentic. It is probable that the situation of the Russian army in Sebastopol may have become known to the Emperor Napoleon by this means, and he had every reason, therefore, to urge the acceleration of the siege-works.* The bombardment begun on the 5th of September, was thus in a certain measure traceable to an express order of the Emperor. But, in any case, also the regular siege-works had just about this time made such progress, that the storming of the Malakoff and the Redan could be contemplated with a greater prospect of success, than on the 18th of June.

To describe here in detail the fearful catastrophe of the 8th of September, is far from my purpose. I know of nothing special to add from my recollections, which the already published letters of my brother have not rendered the common property of all historical writers on the subject. But, to say nothing of the general impression created by the event, would be impossible to anybody who experienced the effect of the redeeming news, and has treasured it in his memory.

* Geffcken also knows of the thefts of the Berlin despatches (loc. cit. 192). But what was told me, at the time, is not what is asserted by Geffcken, that the information in question concerned some particular remark of the Emperor Alexander. Besides, such a remark would have had but slight weight with those judging of the position of Sebastopol. Count Beust informed me from Berlin, that a servant of M. von L— had been able to procure the particular plans indicating the positions and operations of the Russians from General Gerlach's writing-table. As is well-known, the whole affair was afterwards suppressed.

The frequent previous disappointments, with regard to the real or supposed fall of the fortress, had given birth to considerable scepticism. In addition to this, the reports were of a very contradictory nature. The fall of Sebastopol was talked of, and soon after it proved only to be the Malakoff which was in the hands of the allies.

That this powerful fort actually represented the key of Sebastopol, only became known, after it had been taken, and after events had proved those to have been right, who, months ago, had found fault with the allies for not concentrating all their forces against the Malakoff.

Still more exciting were the tidings regarding the fate of the English on the 8th of September. The Redan had been taken and lost again, thus ran the unwelcome news, with which the first impressions of this great event concluded. The laconic communication of General Simpson, that the storming of the Redan had not succeeded, called forth many an unflattering comment on the operations of the English army, which, it was said, had utterly lacked a firm hand to lead it.

It was only after many days, that men were in a position to understand the full consequence of the conquest of the Malakoff, and to pronounce, without fear of a fresh disappointment, in England and France, the great words: 'Sebastopol ours, and the Russian fleet destroyed.'

As to what was now to be done, on that point there existed no clear idea in English Government circles. This is evident from the correspondence of my brother, already published in Martin's work. Although, but a short time before, the liveliest intercourse had been going on between the French and English Sovereigns, all and everything in this horrible war, to the bitter end, was to be left to chance and uncertainty. In England, great and daring projects of conquering the whole of the Crimea were at once taken in hand, and hopes of a fanciful kind entertained with regard to the possibility of cutting off the retreat of the Russian army, and capturing it on the peninsula like in a mouse-trap. But, that General Gortschakoff had all the more surely borne

this danger in mind, the less the Russians had deceived themselves as to the tenableness of Sebastopol, and the more they were determined to preserve to the Russian Empire that most important conquest of Catherine II, this consideration, it appears, hardly commended itself to the English statesmen.

The French, on the other hand, had considered their war as good as ended, and what happened further, was like a slow subsiding of the rage of the fearful conflict, without any intention of making conquests, or maintaining them. Pelissier had two movements executed against Gortschakoff's fortified position, the centre of which was in Simpheropol, one from Sebastopol through the Baidar valley, the other from Eupatoria. But both columns met with far superior Russian forces, and found the ground unfavourable, and the position of the Russian army much too strong to attack them.

The war was now only continued in Caucasia, until, on the 27th of November, the Turks had to deliver up to the Russians the fortress of Kars, which was besieged by Muraviev. Curiously enough, people were of opinion, that the Emperor of Russia would now be more easily prevailed upon to conclude peace, because the conquest of Kars could be set as an equivalent against the fall of Sebastopol, and hence the honour of the combatants would be satisfied on all sides.

In point of fact, however, the negotiations for peace, and the mediations and conferences, had been continued all along, as in the time of the thirty years war, almost regardless of the events of the war. The diplomatists sat, as they once did in Osnabruck and Munster, with enviable calm round their ever green table, whilst, in the field, many a life was falling a victim to the consequences of the war, and, in Europe, the conviction was growing, that this severe war had been uselessly carried on, for the sake of home questions and the foreign prestige of the Western powers.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST PARIS EXHIBITION.—THE QUEEN AND PRINCE ALBERT IN PARIS.—THE DUKE'S OPERA SANTA CHIARA PERFORMED AT THE GRAND OPERA.—CONVERSATIONS WITH NAPOLEON.—HIS SUFFERINGS AND PHYSICAL DECAY.—BITTERNESS AGAINST AUSTRIA.—THE DUKE AND THE AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR.—THE DUKE'S LETTER TO COUNT BUOL.—COUNT BUOL'S ANSWER.—AUSTRIA SUBMITS AN ULTIMATUM IN ST PETERSBURG.—THE KING OF PRUSSIA'S UNWILLINGNESS TO MEDIATE.—HE SUPPORTS AUSTRIA'S ULTIMATUM.—PARIS CHOSEN AS THE SEAT OF THE FUTURE CONFERENCES.—ENGLAND ATTEMPTS TO EXCLUDE PRUSSIA.—LETTER FROM THE DUKE TO PRINCE ALBERT.—THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON'S SATISFACTION AT THE CONCLUSION OF PEACE.—HIS LETTER TO THE DUKE.—RUSSIAN INTRIGUES.—BIRTH OF THE PRINCE IMPERIAL.—THE DUKE ON THE SITUATION.

WHILST, in the Black Sea and the Baltic, the war was still raging in its most terrible shape, the first French International Exhibition had been opened in Paris, on the 15th of May, 1855. All nations assembled in the newly embellished capital of the Empire, in order mutually to assure themselves, how necessary and desirable peace was in our part of the globe.

The culminating point of this epoch was an event which, in more than one respect, was looked upon as a political one: the sojourn of the Queen of England and the Prince Consort at the Court of Louis Napoleon, who was exerting every effort to fasten and deepen the recently gained friendship of the English Royal Family.

Just this purpose was declared, on both sides, to have been completely attained, and, although my brother wrote to Uncle Leopold, that there had been little conversation about politics,

still, in face of the pending questions of war and peace, the attention of the whole world was directed to this meeting of the rulers of the Western Powers.*

However, a few weeks later, when I myself was in the position to visit Paris and her International Exhibition, the political horizon was already thoroughly changed, and the fall of Sebastopol, which had in the meantime taken place, afforded a welcome opportunity to discuss with Louis Napoleon the questions which diplomacy was again exerting every effort to solve. I may therefore say, that I arrived in Paris at a politically much more important moment than my brother. Hence, I had a better opportunity of studying Napoleon's further plans.

But, before I speak of the course of the negotiations for peace, and of my experiences and impressions in that respect, I must first mention a purely personal matter, which was the chief cause of my journey to Paris, and my long stay there. Although this matter had nothing to do with great politics and the welfare of States, it occupied, in all the greater measure, my little ambition in matters of art, to which I had for a long time devoted the one, and, I may add, the by far happier, half of my existence and my time.

During my first stay at the Imperial Court in Paris, in the previous year, I had endeavoured to take the preliminary steps to get my opera '*Santa Chiara*' accepted there. The Emperor interested himself in person most kindly for the performance of my work. But, before this could be attained, there were extraordinary difficulties to overcome, '*Je crois*,' Napoleon wrote to me, on the 25th of July, in one of his letters from Biarritz: '*que le public Parisien sera charmé d'applaudir l'opéra de votre altesse Royale et de la juger comme maestro après l'avoir déjà jugé si favorablement comme Prince*. But the Imperial patronage could only aid in deciding Minister Fould to receive the '*Santa Chiara*' into the repertoire of the Grand Opera. The performance itself depended upon a number of circumstances, which would have grown to insuper-

* The English visit to Paris is minutely described by Martin, *Life of the Prince Consort* III, 333-365. For Prince Albert's letter to King Leopold, cf. *ibid.* III, 367.

able obstacles, unless Meyerbeer had offered me a helping hand. The old *mestro* had visited me in Paris, in March, 1854, and, since that time, had been treating for the performance of the opera with me in the most friendly way. I may therefore believe, as he often assured me, that he took a real and professional interest in my musical productions.

In company with Meyerbeer, I paid visits to all the chief performers, and found everywhere the most ready support. The performance was fixed for the 24th of September. I had been invited by the Emperor to be his guest in the Tuileries, like a year ago, but I urgently requested to be allowed to live with my friend Prince Chimay, who had been taking the greatest trouble to ensure the success of my excursion into the regions of Parisian art.

I arrived in Paris just in time to conduct the rehearsals, and was able to look forward to the first night, with my mind fully at ease, as to the perfect nature of the performance. Every effort the Grand Opera was capable of making, was made with an enthusiasm quite peculiar to the French. Yet I was only too well aware, upon what chances the success of first performances, and especially of foreign productions in Paris, depended, and I was doubly anxious as to the result, seeing that I had to await the fate of my '*Santa Chiara*' at the side of the Emperor and the Empress, whom I accompanied into their box.

However, I was very soon able to recognise the feeling of the public on that evening as friendly, and the performance had a most brilliant success. The Opera was given more than sixty nights running.

In spite of all my lively intercourse with singers and composers, and of my busy occupation with the theatre, the Emperor had afforded me frequent opportunities to speak with him privately and at considerable length, and thus to gain a deeper insight into the recesses of his heart. If I had ever been in doubt, as to the difference that exists in the world, between the official routine, if it may be so termed, of exterior political work, and the real ideas and intentions of the powers working in the background, I could have seen at

that moment, when the official cry of war and the diplomatic skirmishing for peace were still the order of the day, that the thoughts of the most powerful man in Europe hardly took any share in those affairs, but were already moving in quite other directions.

It was extremely interesting, just at this juncture, decisive as it was for the future of Europe, to hear the Emperor Napoleon discuss the situation in the confidential tone which he both adopted and invited in his conversations with me. The Emperor had taken advantage of the fine September days, to give a few hunting-parties in Versailles and Fontainebleau, as he knew that they would afford me great pleasure. He himself was evidently ill, and if I had formerly attached less importance to the accounts which repeatedly spoke of his bad state of health, his appearance now, and the trait of suffering in his countenance, could not fail to convince me that no very long lease of life would be meted out to him. I saw plainly that it was a question of the beginning of a serious evil. He was frequently tormented by such pains, that he had to pause in his speech. When he was sitting, he was sometimes unable to rise without assistance. It was a very sad sight to see this man, who knew himself just arrived at the summit of his position, and secured in the possession of his power, in a state of the plainest physical decay.

But this did not prevent him from expressing himself with full interest, and with all the vivacity which it was given to him to show, on the prospects of peace and war. Only, what he said, was in every respect, and on every subject, different from what was occupying the diplomacy of the period. Napoleon's way of sketching political plans, in great outlines, over the heads of his own Ministers, and without regard to the momentary doings of the statesmen, was once forcibly described by my brother, in one of his later letters, as 'the good-humoured indifference of this ruler towards all things that were in a stage of development.'

How, in spite of the momentary difficulties, peace might be obtained; what means were to be adopted to put an end to the war; and whether the war would ever end at all; all these

matters appeared to be of secondary interest, and not to concern the Emperor, as it were, personally. But he had firmly resolved in his heart on two things, and had become quite hardened in this respect through the course of the war. He was now more than ever intent on having the treaties of 1815 annulled, and saw in Austria the chief obstacle to his plans.

I should hesitate to repeat, merely from my own memory, certain remarks of the Emperor, which had a decided bearing on the events of the next years, and to give the exact date, too, when Napoleon first made them. But I fortunately committed all my conversations with the Emperor to paper at the time, or at least summed them up in a concise form.

PARIS, *September 25, 1855.*

The results of the two detailed conversations which I had with the Emperor yesterday and to-day, may be summed up as follows. The Emperor, who, last May, was not quite satisfied with his position, now considers his and England's position *very* favourable. He sees the desirability of peace, but he thinks nothing obliges him to conclude a peace which does not answer the interests of France. He said, such a peace would be easy to make, if only Russia would show some compliance. Still, the Emperor said, any peace that was brought about now, would cause a certain degree of regret in England and France. For, a peace concluded now, would have nothing but the *character of a great truce*.

Greater satisfaction could only be felt, not merely by the two Powers of the West, who, after all, did not stand alone in the *Concert Européen*, but by all the other States, if the conclusion of peace were at the same time to bring about a solution of those questions which had either been badly settled at the conference of Vienna, or which had arisen since then.

Poland, Italy, etc., said the Emperor, belong to these open questions.

The Emperor observed, that interest ought to be enlisted for the idea of a great Peace Congress. He told me straight

out, that I might speak of this with the King of Prussia, as being an idea which he had communicated to me.

The Emperor thinks of a congress, at which all the great and small sovereigns would have to appear in person. I replied, that such a congress would certainly be quite in accordance with my views, but that the congress could only be the form, whereas the matter itself would have to be prepared beforehand. The Emperor then expounded his general political views, saying that it was an impossibility, in our time, to carry on great wars, and make great political arrangements, which were opposed to the interests of the nations. The voice of the nations would always break through again, and undo everything that had been done contrary to their interests. He would remind me of the liberation wars.

Finally, the Emperor said, Austria had played her part so badly, that nothing could be done with this State. Above all, it was desirable to win Prussia over to the cause of the West. The Emperor then told me, that he had recently said to Minister von der Heydt: '*je trouve toujours que la Prusse est un peu trop maigre.*' He then went on to say, that Austria had not even congratulated him on the taking of Sebastopol. He added, with the bitterest irony, that it was after all a little too bad to congratulate him, when Sebastopol had *not* been taken, and not to do so, now that it had really fallen.

On the last day of my stay, the Emperor informed me that Austria had excused herself for omitting to congratulate on the plea that she had first wished to hear how great the losses had been. An excuse, the Emperor added, which was almost worse than the omission itself.

PARIS, *September 26, 1855.*

The Emperor said to-day, that, in face of such great losses as the Crimean war had caused, we ought to have either a good peace or an everlasting war. Altogether, before conditions could be spoken of, it must be ascertained whether Russia was disposed to make peace. The honour of the com-

batants on both sides was saved. Of conferences like those of Vienna, there could be no more question.

We thereupon spoke of the attitude of the two German Powers. I remarked, that, in any case, only one of those two Powers could undertake the mediation. The Emperor agreed, and said he should always like Prussia best. 'It is quite clear that it is better to attach oneself to a woman who hates us, than to one who has cheated us once before, and that is the case with Austria.

He then explained, that he could not take the King of Prussia's mode of acting amiss, for, after all, he had never entered into an alliance with the Western Powers.

From all he said, there resulted: 1. That the Emperor would not like to conclude a peace, such as Russia would probably accept.

2. That he hoped it would be possible to make up for the alliance with Austria by an alliance with Prussia, and this, too, at Austria's expense.

3. That he still adhered to his plan of reconstituting the suppressed nationalities, but that he still thought it possible to carry out this plan by means of peace and not of war.

From the foregoing records, the reader will have gained the conviction, that the thoughts of the Emperor, after the fall of Sebastopol, were moving on quite other lines than the official exchange of notes, which European diplomacy had not only commenced with a busy hand, but was carrying on with great publicity, communicating the details to the chambers and the journals with a rapidity hardly known until then. I had reason to assume that, especially in Vienna, men were labouring under great delusions, for, in spite of the deplorable personal position, of which the Austrian Ambassador in Paris had only too clear a conception, they were yet far from believing in any danger that might be impending over Austria. The time of suffering which Herr von Huebner had to go through in Paris, was evident to everybody. The Austrian statesmen in Vienna, on the other hand, were scarcely inclined to admit the existence of a situation, in which their indefatigable attempts at mediating peace almost assumed

the appearance of diplomatic fancies. Whilst, at the time of the Queen of England's visit, Herr von Huebner had been playing a very difficult part at the Court of the Tuileries, he still thought it advisable to declare, that Austria had not for one moment altered her kindly sentiments towards the Western Powers.

'Monsieur de Huebner,' a correspondent wrote to me in August, 'n' a pas paru au bal ; on se demandait s' il y avait rancune de sa part à la suite des soirées plus intimes de St Cloud, où il n' avait plus été prié. D'autres disaient qu'il avait peut-être pris en mauvaise part les sourires de la loge impériale au moment où dans les Demoiselles de St. Cyr un acteur se plaint du cœur noir de l'Autriche.'

It was explainable, under these circumstances, that Herr von Huebner urgently requested me to use my influence in Vienna to induce the Government to act. On my showing myself somewhat reserved, he expressed the desire, that I should at least write and tell Buol how matters stood here, as his own reports did not find sufficient credence.

I fulfilled the wish of the Austrian diplomatist, who, both before and afterwards, experienced much unmerited misfortune in his difficult mission, directly after my return from Paris, with far greater freedom and frankness than he may have expected. But I must leave it to the reader himself to form his own opinion from the contents of my correspondence with Count Buol, as to whether my well-meant endeavours bore any fruit.

' October 5, 1855.

'I have not written to Your Excellency for a long time. The observations, however, which I have taken during my stay in Paris, inspire me with the wish to communicate with you again.

'It is evident that the fall of Sebastopol has not yet definitely altered the views of the French Court with regard to its position towards the two German Powers. But I have not been able to shut my eyes to the fact that the policy of France might, in consequence of that event, still be induced to

adopt another view. It appeared to me, as if Austria entered less than formerly into the calculations of future action, and as if it were believed, that Austria desired, once for all, to maintain a separate position; as if, in fact, a cooling of the good relations between Austria and France were preparing.

‘I have always been of opinion, that the present Emperor of the French has given great guarantees of an attitude favourable to us all, not merely in respect to order in general, but, by the tendency of his foreign policy, in respect to Germany in particular. Hence, I always thought it correct to show him confidence, and to make use of the present favourable state of affairs in France, in order to procure for Germany a better position towards the East, than she has been occupying for a long time in the South-east, and, since 1815, in the North-east.

‘As to what Austria could do, in a political respect, towards this end, I will not pretend to have formed any positive judgment. Only on one point I think I may express myself more decidedly, after what I have observed during my stay in Paris. If your most gracious Sovereign, so far as I can see, still considers himself the ally of the West, it would be very desirable to give the Emperor of the French some outward sign of the fact. Owing to his position with the French people, the Emperor necessarily sets great value on such outward tokens. They have given to the English alliance that high degree of intimacy which elevates it above ordinary political alliances.

‘A good understanding with France would be of all the greater value to Germany, as the fall of Sebastopol has rather postponed peace than brought it nearer. It is known that Russia’s importance now only lies in her power of resistance by virtue of her dimensions, in short, that her distances are her protection, and no longer her troops.

‘But all these facts are not only well known in Paris and London, but are even admitted by the Prussian Court.

‘Begging you to remember me very humbly to your most gracious Sovereign, I remain your Excellency’s, etc.

‘ERNEST.’

Count Buol's answer took a long time coming. The conviction had really been arrived at in Vienna, that something decided ought to be done, but an understanding as to a basis of peace which would be recognised by England and France alike, was not very rapidly attained. The French and English views were several times in direct opposition to one another, and Count Buol had difficulty in finding the desired medium, which was to enable him to put an ultimatum in St Petersburg.

As, during these negotiations, Austria's relations to France appeared to have somewhat improved again for the moment, Count Buol was at last able to answer my letter, on the 16th of December, with a sort of proud consciousness :

‘Your Highness has been graciously pleased, after your return from Paris, to give me some extremely valuable hints with regard to the policy and the feeling of the French Court. I have not failed to make use of them, and it affords me particular satisfaction to mention the truly intimate relations which just now exist between the two Imperial cabinets. The good fruits will, I hope, shortly manifest themselves in the treatment of Eastern affairs.

‘In consequence of an exchange of ideas with Paris, and the influence of the Emperor Napoleon on the English Cabinet, Austria, France, and England, have just agreed on a basis of peace, which, in my opinion, would completely solve the question that gave rise to the war.

‘Our Ambassador is taking it to St Petersburg to-day, and we have to await the reception which these proposals, energetically urged as they are by *Us*, will meet with there. As we imposed the strictest secrecy on ourselves during the negotiations, my consideration for the Russian Emperor imperatively demands that I should not say a word of the text, until it has been submitted to him. Meanwhile, I could not deny myself the satisfaction of informing Your Highness of the fact, and at the same time adding the comforting assurance that the conditions are of such a kind, that Russia's ascendancy would be thoroughly broken, and Germany's interests duly considered.

‘Whether Russia’s pride will admit of their acceptance, lies outside the sphere of my calculations. At any rate, there appear to me to be very weighty grounds for earnestly considering the serious consequences of a direct refusal.

‘If Russia should, this time again, refuse to accept the means of settling the difference, our further steps would have to be decided upon by mutual agreement. I have every reason to hope that, also in this last phase, the good understanding between the three Powers will continue. As to the part, on the other hand, which Germany will play in that case, my mind is less at ease, for reasons on which I need not enlarge, because they are too well known to Your Highness. Should I be in the position to add any interesting fact to these preliminary remarks, I ask Your Highness’s gracious permission to do so. Until then, I remain, with the deepest respect, Your Highness’s most humble and devoted servant,

‘COUNT BUOL.

‘VIENNA, *December* 16, 1855.’

This letter the Austrian Minister supplemented a few days afterwards :

‘MOST GRACIOUS DUKE!—In pursuance of the communication which I recently took the liberty of addressing to Your Highness, I now beg to submit to the enlightened judgment of Your Highness the text of the preliminaries which we have sent to St Petersburg. I likewise take the liberty to add a copy of the accompanying instructions to Count Valentine Esterhazy.

‘The conditions of this programme may perhaps appear severe to Russia and her absolute adherents, but they find their justification in the situation of affairs, and, that the stricter guarantees which have been demanded since the Vienna Conferences, are to the special advantage of German Danubian interests, should redound to the credit of our step in Germany. Unfortunately, an unfavourable feeling appears to prevail in Berlin, and I reckon the less on the first impression in St Petersburg, as only a lasting general pressure can

succeed in inducing Russia to yield. We know to-day, through the telegraph, that Count Esterhazy arrived in St Petersburg yesterday afternoon, but nothing as yet about his first doings.

‘Were it not for France’s loyalty, however, there would be no lack of tools in Germany, who would work towards bringing about a direct understanding between France and Russia, without taking too exact an account of the present disadvantages and future dangers arising therefrom to Germany. Let us hope that the more correct view may also be the general one.

‘I remain, with the renewed expression of my deepest respect,

‘Your Highness’s most devoted and obedient servant,

‘COUNT BUOL.

‘VIENNA, *December 27, 1855.*’

For the moment, Austria, by her measures against Russia, as designated in the foregoing letters, had certainly managed to place herself in a better position. Although it was not believed in England, that the Russians would yield to the Austrian ultimatum, and although the opinion was spread by Prussia, that the ultimatum was a piece of paper in the importance of which the Austrian Cabinet itself did not believe, in France, on the other hand, the boldest hopes were attached to Austria’s intervention.

I wrote to the Emperor of the French at New Year, that the communications of Count Buol had convinced me afresh, that Austria had quite honest intentions, and I endeavoured, in every way, to oppose the personally resentful feelings of Napoleon against Austria. At the same time, I gave expression to my hope, that, if not a lasting alliance, at least an understanding, with Austria might prove obtainable, as it had proved with England, in order at last to establish an alliance of peace in the interests of civilisation.

With regard to the distinct grouping of the Powers against Russia, however, the position of Prussia still remained an open question. The bitter feeling in England against Prussia was just as great as that of France against Austria.

Neither Prussia's mediation, nor her alliance, nor, indeed, her participation in any negotiations or conferences, was desired.

The prevailing interest in the complete humiliation of Russia, and the express desire to continue the war, gave rise to a tendency on the part of the English, which made it appear quite natural to them that the war against Russia should be continued in the spring by the French on the Rhine. They then hoped, with the assistance of Austria, to make I don't know what conquests in Bessarabia, in the Crimea, and in the Caucasus.

My uncle, who derived his information chiefly from English sources, prophesied, innumerable times, in his letters to me, the Franco-Prussian war as a necessary continuation of the unhappy conflict, and it was difficult to make English politicians understand, that Napoleon thought of nothing less than weakening Prussia, and that nothing was farther from his mind than waging war against Germany, whose friendship was at that period his most ardent, and, it may be said, his enthusiastic, desire.

In fact, the personal feeling of the Emperor of the French in some measure really came to the help of the Prussian Ministry in its disagreeable position. For, since the fall of Sebastopol, the King had almost entirely withdrawn from international politics. Towards the end of September, directly after my stay in Paris, I had gone to Coblenz, to meet the King and the Prince of Prussia. I found the King in a very excited frame of mind, which the Prince of Prussia was endeavouring to moderate and turn to good purpose. In our conversations about the political situation, it was extremely difficult to follow the passionate utterances of the King. Indeed, it would be impossible to remember them to-day, had I not taken the trouble, at the time, to commit the most salient points in His Majesty's views to paper.

The most singular feature about the King's view of things was his under-estimation of the power and position of his own State. He said repeatedly, that it was quite immaterial whether Prussia or Baden undertook the mediation. People were constantly doing him wrong, by asserting that he was

prejudiced against the West. He always wished for the equilibrium, but, as a German, he had no interest at all in the Eastern war. If merely diplomatic intervention was desired, Baden could manage it just as well as Prussia.

He admitted that there was 'a party' in the country that wanted to drive him towards an impossible goal, and was endeavouring to compromise him everywhere as friendly disposed towards Russia. But he himself was clever enough to see through these people, and he did not require to be tutored by strangers.

He disliked Russian doings, now as much as formerly, and the war had proved that the army was good for nothing, for which reason it would be folly in him to ally himself with Russia.

When I tried to catch him at this word, and pointed out what a favourable position Prussia occupied in consequence, the King answered, that nobody listened to Prussia, and that what he said was the last thing the Powers took account of, if, indeed, they took any account of it at all. He then went on to say, that all counsels were superfluous, after the fall of Sebastopol, for it would now be shown, whether the Emperor of the French was as good as his word. He had promised him to make peace, as soon as Sebastopol had fallen.

This last very striking remark determined me to enquire, who had brought this admission of Napoleon's to the knowledge of the King. But I could never learn how the King had come to make this assertion, as Hatzfeld, Wedell, and Usedom, assured me that they knew absolutely nothing of the matter.

Whilst matters were in this position, the news arrived, that Austria had submitted an ultimatum. The Emperor Francis Joseph himself communicated its contents to the King in an autograph letter, and begged him to urge its acceptance in St Petersburg.*

The King hesitated for some days, but at last both he and Manteuffel were seized with a kind of peace-fever, and both did their best to bring about the acceptance of the Austrian ultimatum. It was not only the King's letter to the Emperor

Alexander, but, above all, Manteuffel's strict instructions to Baron Werther in St Petersburg to insist, firmly and unconditionally, on the conclusion of peace, which actually brought about the decision.

As for the Emperor of the French, the end of the war was welcome to him under any circumstances, so long as the English could not be induced to give up their principle of '*désintéressement*' in continuing it. But there was no hope of this, and thus Napoleon was able to communicate to his Parisians, with unconcealed delight, Frederick William IV's news of the acceptance of the articles of peace in St Petersburg. He had the satisfaction of having subjected the proverbial 'disinterestedness of England's war-zeal' to a little defeat.

At the same time he was in the position to designate Paris as the seat of the future conferences, before the situation itself had become quite clear to minds in England; and, though nobody was altogether inclined to hear of a Congress, still, newspapers and diplomatists were already busy in publicly discussing all sorts of subjects and questions, which the Conferences were to settle.

The English revenged themselves a little on Prussia, by attempting to prevent her from entering the Conferences of Paris. But it had to be recognised, ultimately, that the exclusion of the fifth Great Power from a Congress, which was already about to open its doors to Sardinia, would have been a proceeding unheard of in the annals of Europe. However, in consequence of the everlasting temporising of Prussia, the bitter feelings of English politicians had reached such a pitch, that even my brother gave full scope to his sarcastic vein against the fifth Great Power.

Thus he once wrote, not unwittily, about Berlin: 'One is obliged to say with Schiller's Diver, '*Da unten aber ist's fürchterlich!*' (Down there 'tis horrible, indeed). The confusion in the realm of ideas must be something awful, and it is only to be marvelled at, and recognised as a proof of the sound nature of the Prussian State, that it has not yet been entirely ruined by it.

'The protocol has now been signed in Vienna, and the

negotiations are to commence in Paris this day three weeks. I am beginning to believe that the Russians seriously mean peace. That they intend to shave us on this occasion, stands to reason, but the King of Prussia must not be surprised, if we here do not wish him to assist by tying the napkin round our necks. In Paris, there are many who, for a little money, will be ready to prepare the lather for the occasion.'

In face of all this, I considered it my duty, from my modest standpoint, to draw attention to the fact, that it would be an impossible and unheard of thing to exclude Prussia from a European Congress. Moreover, the Prussian Cabinet had, on the 3rd of February, 1856, communicated a despatch to the Austrian Government, in which all the conditions stipulated for Prussia's entrance into the Conferences, were acceded to. In the need of the moment, it was even contemplated in Berlin, to demand Prussia's entrance into the Conference chiefly as the representative of the German Confederation. It was the Saxon Minister, Herr von Beust, who particularly recommended this idea, so little worthy of a Great Power.

In a report which I made to my brother on the position of affairs, I endeavoured more definitely to state the points of view indicated. But I refrain from communicating that extensive document here in full, because it scarcely contains any new matter, and shall confine myself to dwelling on a few of its chief points.

'Enclosed I send you the newest Prussian utterance, which perhaps may not reach you through any other channel. It contains pretty well everything that can be demanded of Prussia, before she is admitted into the conference chamber. It contains both the offer to sign the preliminaries, and the promise not to let them be prejudiced. If you like, the King will make up his mind to sign a treaty similar to the one signed by Austria in December. He feels that, by being excluded from the Conferences, he would be injured in the eyes of Europe and his own subjects. The opportunity is now favourable Not only for the King of Prussia, but for Prussia herself, it is a matter of real interest, that she should at least formally participate in the settlement of an acknowledged European Question

‘The fear of not being admitted to the Conference prompts the King to think that, if he should not be admitted as King of Prussia, he would surely be granted admittance as the representative of Frankfort. Hence his new fraternisation with Saxony . . . by this union, Beust intends to render Prussia’s entrance into the Conference still more difficult. Prussia is to cease being a Great Power, and to rest modestly content with the same share in European politics as Bavaria and Saxony. The King believed in all earnest that he would get on better by this means.

‘These latest tidings were brought by N. N., who has had long conferences with the King and the Minister, and who thinks and acts quite in accordance with my views. Before Beust came, the King was ready to side entirely with Austria. But he now finds, to use his own words, that the Trias might form a fine transition to German affairs.’

A few painful weeks still elapsed before Prussia’s plenipotentiaries succeeded in obtaining admission to the Conference. Until the 18th of March, when the immediate dispute about the differences of the belligerents appeared to be adjusted, the German Great Power—even at the present day, it cannot be mentioned without the deepest grief—was condemned to wait in the ante-chamber. She was afterwards allowed to share in such business as concerned the ‘general interests of Europe.’

The political situation was at this moment entirely altered, and the profound change in French policy, which I had been in a position to follow, step by step, since my September visit in Paris, now appeared before the eyes of Europe in all its inexorable distinctness. The slight sulkiness that was perceptible between the allied Western Powers, showed itself also in my brother’s letters. But it was never strong enough to cause any anxiety with regard to the permanence of the alliance. On the other hand, the position of the two German Great Powers changed, in proportion as, not only peace, but the mutual understanding between France and Russia, became assured.

Prince Chimay wrote, on the 28th of February, very pertinently : ‘*L’Empereur est heureux et très fier du*

rôle vraiment incroyable et magnifique que la Providence lui assigne dans les affaires d'Europe.' And another correspondent reports about the commencement of the ceremonies on the occasion of the arrival of the Ambassadors at the Congress, on the 25th: 'Yesterday evening there was a concert at His Majesty's, to which few, but select, invitations had been issued. One of the happy select told me, that all possible courtesies and attentions had been showered on Count Orloff and M. de Brunnow, whereas a visible coolness was observable towards the Austrian plenipotentiary.'

The Emperor himself was fully determined to bring about peace with Prussia at any price. Before the Conference had yet met, I had represented to him, through Prince Chimay, that the moment appeared to have arrived, when a future understanding with Prussia, and consequently with Germany, would be possible. But the Emperor answered me chiefly with unconcealed delight at being rid of the disagreeable Eastern war.

PALAIS DES TUILERIES, *le 11 Mars*, 1856.

MON CHER DUC,—Je n'ai pas répondu plutôt à Votre Altesse Royale, parceque je voulais lui donner quelques nouvelles sur les conférences. Aujourd'hui je puis vous dire, que la paix est assurée, car on est d'accord sur toutes les conditions principales. Certes, j'ai apprécié, comme elles le méritent, les communications dont vous avez chargées le Prince de Chimay de me faire part, mais aujourd'hui la paix me donne bien des avantages et la guerre en Crimée était trop coutante pour pouvoir être prolongée. Les sacrifices n'étaient pas en rapport avec les bénéfices qu'on pouvait espérer en retirer. Je suis toujours bien reconnaissant à Votre Altesse Royale des sentiments d'amitié qu'elle me conserve et j'espère qu'elle ne doutera jamais des miens. Je les lui renouvelle donc avec toute l'assurance de mes sentiments d'estime et de véritable affection.

VOTRE FRÈRE NAPOLEON.

The French Emperor's blissful confidence in peace could only be correctly judged by those who understood the secret thoughts which then occupied the Emperor's mind. Never has a congress been looked upon so entirely as a mere

curtain to the scenery that was about to be built up, as that of Paris. What the diplomatists had to say to one another, may have contained much that was precious. But it had a chiefly decorative significance, and need therefore scarcely be mentioned in particular here. On what went on behind the curtain, I received manifold reports, which were all of the same tenor, and sufficiently explained why the English were growing more and more discontented, the longer the Conferences lasted.

‘There is a zeal and a rapidity,’ a correspondent wrote to me, at the end of March, ‘in everything the Russians do, say, and prepare, here, which makes it evident that the misfortune of war has bestowed new wings on their Government, instead of crushing it. It hastens and urges the conclusion of peace; it does not let itself be deterred by unexpected little demands; it submits and gives way, in order to gather its forces, to complete them, or to create fresh ones. They are an elastic nation, who conceive their plans with boldness and execute them with energy. Russia is henceforward to take the place in the alliance with France, which is now occupied by England and Austria. They regularly throw themselves at the Emperor Napoleon’s head. All the Russians here make a show of admiring everything the French monarch does and says, which borders on enthusiasm.

‘Whenever disputes arise on questions before the Congress, Count Orloff appeals to the verdict of Louis Napoleon, declaring that he will abide by his decision. *Le Nord* has received instructions, in accordance with which this paper, hitherto so spiteful against Napoleon, will, in a month, be ardently Bonapartistic. Its debit is already assured in France for that time.

‘Among the German and French writers here, recruits are being made for far-reaching plans. Before a year has elapsed, more than ten journals will take their pass-word from the Russian embassy. On the Rhine, too, and in Leipzig, Stuttgart, Vienna, Prague, and Pesth, new papers are to be founded, or existing ones purchased. This plan is a fact.

‘The *resumé* of the Russian programme may therefore be

stated under the following three heads : Alliance with France ; speedy construction of the military railway lines in the interior of the Empire ; cultivation of public opinion in Central Europe.'

The March of the year 1856 appeared, in every respect, destined to raise the Emperor of the French to the summit of his fortune, and my uncle tersely described the situation, when he said : ' My neighbour can do everything for good and for evil. We shall see how he manages it, for he has good reason to praise his fortune in these latter years, and his star shines brighter than ever.'

And it was not only the political world which Napoleon at this moment saw at his feet ; he also believed his boldest wishes and hopes for the future of his house fulfilled. For, whilst the attention of the whole world was directed towards the decisions of the Conference in Paris, Fate seemed desirous to seal the fortunes of the House of the Bonapartes, as it were, in quite a special way. In the early morning of the 16th of March, I, too, received one of the innumerable telegrams saying : *L'impératrice est heureusement accouchée d'un prince. Sa Majesté et l'enfant se portent bien.*

The ambassador whom I sent to the Emperor with my letter of congratulation, found Paris in ecstasies. The Congress seemed only to exist to play the part of the three holy Kings before the manger. The paternal delight of the Emperor was reflected in the amiable letter of thanks which he sent me, in great haste, on the 27th of March, and which contained, among other things, the passage : '*L'impératrice a bien souffert, mais elle va toute bien aujourd'hui aussi que le petit garçon, qui est gros et gras.*'

Three days later, on the 30th of March, at one o'clock, peace was signed, and the Congress closed. The same evening, Paris shone forth in the brilliancy of the grandest illumination imaginable, as if to prove how little popular the war had been.

'La France trouve certainement une grande compensation,' Prince Chimay wrote, in a long report, the next day, 'à ses projets intimes dans la position qui lui est moralement faite, et d'ailleurs la

guerre lui devenait une trop lourde charge dans les conditions données, mais enfin, je crois que Votre Altesse pensera avec moi qu'elle espérait peut-être autre chose.

‘Peut-on considérer la Sardaigne et la Turquie comme satisfaites? Au point de vue anglais la situation de la Russie n'est-elle pas fortifiée en Asie? De toutes ces graves réflexions que j'aborde à peine, il me semble bien difficile de conclure à un long repos pour l'Europe.’

It was not difficult, in fact, to play the prophet at that moment, and the feeling was pretty general, that the war had been useless. For us in Germany, an opportunity had been neglected to make good the mistakes of the years 1848 and 1850. Maybe that a hundred years hence, when history will no longer take strict account of a decennary or so, people will think with more indifference of the chapter of German sins of omission. But the generation of those who stood for the greater part of their lives in the midst of the battle, and whose national existence was, so to say, stunted by full twenty years, will not be likely to look back coolly and calmly on those years. And thus may this chapter of my life close with the following lines addressed to my brother:

‘Probably no tidings of peace have ever made so sad an impression upon a patriotic party, as the present ones. However, Germany's destiny is bound to be fulfilled. I preach patience on all sides, and quiet preparation for the battle that must and will come.

‘Although the peace itself contains a complete fulfilment of the programme set up at the beginning of the war, and perhaps something still beyond that, one's heart could bleed at the thought of *what* might have been attained, and what successes gained.

‘The Russians now appear desirous of making up for the mistakes of the Emperor Nicholas. They are joining France everywhere, and want to make believe, that there is nothing more in the way of an alliance with France. This alliance was, in fact, already under the former Government, the Eldorado of the Old Russian party. They hoped by this

means to push forward the frontier of Russia to the mouth of the Vistula, and were willing to give France the left bank of the Rhine in return. They reproached the Emperor with not wishing for the alliance with France.

‘Last summer, some distinguished Russians still expressed the opinion that the genuine Russians regarded the Imperial family as a noble race of immigrants, who sacrificed the greatness of Russia to their family connection with Prussia. This passion for aggrandisement at the expense of Germany will now break out all the more vehemently, after their defeat in the Eastern question. The *mot d'ordre* of the Russians and the friends of Russia is: Franco-Russian alliance, revenge on Austria, revenge on England.

‘In the course of the next weeks and months, we shall see the Russians in full activity in Germany. All the important German newspapers, it is said, are to be bought up by Russia, and are then, under the protection of the police and the police administrations, to ply the general public, which is confused enough without that. An opposition press is almost impossible, as it is. The slightest word is followed by the confiscation of the paper, judicial investigation, and banishment of the editors and writers. If this state of things continues, and matters go too far, the result will be a fearful reaction among the people towards the left. But if the authorities are cautious, and keep the public in its morbid sleep; if they support this newly arisen money-craze and the inclination to pluck the unripe fruits of economic improvements all at once, a dissolution of the nation will probably take place, similar to that which is increasing day by day in France.’

CHAPTER VI

NEW FAMILY ALLIANCES.—PRINCESS VICTORIA'S BETROTHAL TO
FREDERICK WILLIAM OF PRUSSIA.—FIRST INDICATIONS OF THE
MATCH.—ENGAGEMENT OF THE PRINCE REGENT OF BADEN TO
PRINCESS LOUISA OF PRUSSIA.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—
THE ENGAGEMENT IN ENGLAND KEPT SECRET.—ATTACKS ON
PRUSSIA IN THE ENGLISH PRESS.—THE FEELING ON THE PROPOSED
MARRIAGE IN BERLIN.—INDEPENDENCE OF THE KING OF PRUSSIA.
—DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BELGIUM AND FRANCE.—KING LEOPOLD'S
JUBILEE.—MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCE REGENT OF BADEN AND
PRINCESS LOUISA OF PRUSSIA.—THE DUKE CHOOSES A WIFE FOR
THE SON OF THE DUKE OF AUGUSTENBURG.—MARRIAGE OF PRINCE
FREDERICK WILLIAM OF PRUSSIA AND THE PRINCESS ROYAL.—
LETTERS FROM PRINCE ALBERT AND THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF
PRUSSIA.—CHARACTER OF PRINCE FREDERICK WILLIAM AND THE
PRINCESS ROYAL.—THE DUKE'S INFLUENCE ON THE YOUNG PRINCE.
—MARRIAGE OF THE ARCHDUKE MAXIMILIAN OF AUSTRIA AND
PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF BELGIUM.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.
—MARRIAGE BETWEEN KING PEDRO OF PORTUGAL AND PRINCESS
STEPHANIE OF HOHENZOLLERN.

AFTER the storms of the Crimean war, a short pause ensued in the development of great European affairs, which was employed by the diplomatists in bringing about new situations and new alliances. But, also in the sovereign houses, the momentary calm in our hemisphere appeared opportune for establishing, or contemplating, new relations between the ruling families. In this way it happened that, in the time between the fall of Sebastopol and the Italian war, a series of matrimonial alliances was concluded, which became of importance to Germany, and had a considerable influence on the relations of all the monarchic Powers of Europe. The Crimean war had more than ever opened men's eyes to the

difficulty of bringing the old monarchies out of the track of old alliances and existing family ties. But the ideas and hopes which had come to grief on the paths of diplomacy and politics, seemed realisable in a more distant future, in the shape of princely betrothals and marriages, for the founding of new pedigrees—so it was then thought—must needs result to the coming generation in an entirely new grouping and distribution of the relations of the European Powers.

The genealogical relations of the Prussian Royal house had long afforded a curious picture in their fluctuations between the West and the East. Whereas family alliances between orthodox Russia and catholic Austria were almost entirely excluded, the protestant creed of the Hohenzollerns by no means prevented their being strongly drawn to the family of the Czar, and the relations that were thus established, unquestionably exercised their influence upon Germany. The Crimean war had just given the world a political lesson on this connection of things.

Now, was it not extremely curious that, before peace with Russia was yet concluded, the matrimonial plans of the Prussian Royal house were on the point of taking a decided tendency towards the West of Europe? The union of a Prussian heir-apparent with a Princess of my widely connected house was no doubt an event which, at that moment at least, appeared to be opposed to the Russian traditions; and when it was considered, how men were accustomed to regard my brother, (at the end of the war in striking contrast to its commencement) as the moving power against Russia, the marriage of a daughter of the Queen of England with a Prussian prince, who was next but one in succession to the crown, could not fail to have an eminently political character attributed to it.

My brother, however, loved his eldest daughter much too tenderly, to yield at the outset to exclusively political points of view, in settling her future marriage. For many years, as I often had occasion to notice, his heart's desire had been to see his favourite child, in whose development he had had the greatest personal share, in a great position. He took a paternal delight in fancying his promising, talented, and pre-

cocious, daughter on a powerful throne, but, above all, I knew how much he also desired to render her inwardly happy.

Among the princes of Royal houses, the son of the Prince of Prussia had, since the beginning of the fifties, been raising the highest expectations in every respect. Maybe that a union was already thought of at a somewhat earlier date than the outward facts allow of our supposing. Still, there was so marked a difference of age between the young Prince Frederick William of Prussia and the Princess Victoria, that any speculations which may have been indulged in at a very early date, were not very likely of fulfilment. Notwithstanding, in the 'Life of the Prince Consort' there are indications which admit of the supposition that Baron Stockmar had, I don't know since when, been contemplating the union of the Prussian and the English houses as a desirable political object.*

The parents of Prince Frederick William had frequently seen Princess Victoria during their stay in England in the year 1853, when she, then at the age of thirteen, made a most winning impression on all hearts, and especially on the guests then present at the English Court.† Previous to this date, probably, no serious idea of a marriage between the future Prussian Crown Prince and the daughter of my brother had ever suggested itself. In the year 1855, it was said that Prince Frederick William would set out on his travels for the purpose of selecting his future wife. He came to England at the same time that I went to the International Exhibition in Paris, and arrived on the 14th of September in Balmoral, where the Court was then residing. When I repaired to Coblenz, to visit the Prussian Royal family on my return journey from Paris, the confidential news of the betrothal of the young people, which had meanwhile taken place, had arrived under the seal of strict secrecy.

But a second family event had just then occurred in Coblenz, which gave me and my wife no less pleasure, and which was the special cause of our presence there, together

* Martin, 'Life of the Prince Consort' iii. 385, iv. 168.

† Cf. vol. III. p. 28

with the mother of my wife, the Dowager Grand-Duchess of Baden. My brother-in-law, the Prince Regent of Baden, had become betrothed to Princess Louisa, the daughter of the Prince of Prussia and Princess Augusta.

Frederick William IV, who was then staying with the Queen in Stolzenfels, hailed the two betrothals of his brother's children with the greatest enthusiasm, and my brother set especial value on the fact that his daughter's engagement so entirely accorded with the wishes of the King, the uncle of the bridegroom.

Under these circumstances, the news of the happy event could not be prevented from reaching the public sooner than had been the intention of the Royal parties. The more this engagement had been desired in Germany, the sooner and the more readily the rumour of it was believed in. Indeed, a more pleasing and promising picture of the probable happiness and the political importance of an impending marriage could hardly be conceived.

Notwithstanding, my brother did not wish the betrothal to be officially announced just yet. The reader will, at the present day, be doubly glad to learn his view of this whole event, from the confidential remarks which he addressed to me on the subject; and, although I am well aware that particulars of this kind cannot have any historical importance, still, I may be sure that, in face of the interest which attaches to each single person concerned, my accounts will be received with a sort of reverent feeling, similar to that with which I myself have always clung to these family reminiscences.

'I received yesterday,' my brother wrote on the 24th of September, 'your letter of the 20th, according to which you will arrive in Coblenz to-day, on your return from Paris. You will perhaps have heard there, what I am writing you to-day, that our guest has already expressed to us his desire to unite himself with Vicky, *with the King's approval*. We have readily consented, but have requested him not to make his proposal to Vicky herself, before her confirmation next spring. There can be no idea of a marriage, before her seventeenth birthday in November 1857. You will recognise

with us the importance of this event, and share our pleasure in it. The parents in Coblenz are extremely delighted, and the betrothal of the sister with your brother-in-law includes you and Alexandrine too all the more closely in these ties.

‘If I close, it is only my lame hand and bad shoulder that force me to do so. It is only since yesterday that I am again able to hold a pen, though badly enough. Fritz William leaves us again to-morrow. And now the general request to keep our secret under the given circumstances. The whole world will talk of the event, but, so long as none of us do so, it does not matter.’

The latter supposition of my brother was all the more justified, as, in spite of the postponement at first intended, the formal proposal of the Prince to the Princess had already taken place in the course of the next few days, and the Prince had left England as an accepted suitor. It was no doubt the secrecy of the matter that enabled several newspapers, which, like the *Times*, were violently incensed against Prussia, to raise their voices against the merely suspected union in a manner which caused deep distress to the Queen and my brother. The hardest words were to be heard that have ever fallen in the English Press against Prussia and the House of Hohenzollern.

But, also in various reactionary circles of the Prussian capital, the family events of Balmoral and Stolzenfels excited all manner of discontent. The greater the delight with which the more liberal papers in Germany hailed them, the more keenly the opposite party felt the unfavourable tendencies of the time, that were threatening, at the Court of Berlin, to increase the influence of princely relatives whose sentiments were so little liked. However, it was one of the peculiarities of Frederick William IV, that he would submit to no restraint in respect of his personal sympathies, least of all from those whom he trusted in politics and affairs of State. Hence, the secret opponents had to be very careful not to give vent to their dissatisfaction with the new family alliances.

In the beginning of the year 1856, the festival of the Order of the Black Eagle afforded a special occasion for a

manifestation of the more intimate impulses of the Royal grace. My brother-in-law of Baden and I were summoned to the chapter, in order to receive the chain of the Order of the Black Eagle, and the King took this opportunity to distinguish us both in a very marked manner.

I travelled home from Berlin by way of Dresden, where I received abundant information with regard to the future prospects of peace and war, from several old acquaintances and friends, among others the Austrian Ambassador Prince Richard Metternich, whose correct judgment and good knowledge of affairs I had already repeatedly learned to value. As I have mentioned in a former chapter, the very decided need of peace at this juncture so fully outweighed all future plans of war, that the favourable issue of the Congress in Paris was reckoned upon as certain.

Thus, with the in-coming spring of the year 1856, people were again able to devote themselves to affairs of peace. Festivities and weddings started out of the ground, as it were, on every side. My uncle in Brussels notably belonged to those rulers whom the restoration of peace seemed to have released from a heavy night-mare. During the Paris Congress, he had had occasion to complain of a serious difficulty, which the French Minister Walewski had caused him, by accusing the Belgian Press of continually agitating in a manner hostile to the Western Powers, and in particular to France. When the English Ambassador addressed an interpellation on the subject to the French Minister, the latter, as my brother wrote to me on the 12th of May, committed 'the still greater folly of representing the matter, as if our uncle had himself desired the attack.'

The King always regarded his dangerous neighbour with a certain feeling of anxiety, to which he had already repeatedly given expression in reference to the Congress in Paris.* Thus he wrote to me, at the time: 'The future will in any case bring fresh wars. . . . The affair could be adjusted in the old style, but, as matters stand, something will very probably soon have to be settled again by the sword.'

* Cf. vol. III, p. 209.

In face of such apprehensions, which were perhaps more serious than the King was at that moment justified in entertaining with regard to the plans and intentions of Napoleon, it afforded him the greatest satisfaction to be able to look forward to the jubilee of his twenty-five years' reign, under circumstances which were calculated to let the condition of his kingdom shine forth in renewed splendour, and to strengthen afresh the attachment of the nation to the Royal house.

In the beginning of July, my uncle went with his younger son and his daughter to England, and had the intention of persuading my brother to assist at the ceremonies of his jubilee. However, considering the less friendly feeling that prevailed between the two Western Powers since the end of the Congress, it did not seem advisable for the Prince Consort of England to appear in person, unless the other Great Powers were also officially notified and invited. Hence it was decided, on the part of England, to send only Lord Westmoreland to Brussels, as the representative of the Royal Family.

The unconstrained and sincere way in which the Royal anniversary was celebrated throughout the whole country, produced a deep impression over all Europe, and the constitutional principles seemed once more splendidly vindicated. The words which the former president of the Congress of the year 1831, standing, after the lapse of twenty-five years, at the head of the still surviving members of that brilliant elective assembly, now addressed to King Leopold, met with a powerful echo, particularly in those States where personal government prevailed, either entirely, or in the form of a sham constitutionalism.

The most obstinate adherents of absolute monarchy, although they might look upon so young a State as Belgium as hardly affording an adequate test, could not remain indifferent to the remark of the aged Herr von Gerlache: *Au milieu des commotions qui ont ébranlé tant de gouvernements, la Belgique est demeurée fidèlement attachée à son Prince et aux institutions qu'elle s'est données. Cette sorte de phénomène, rare dans notre siècle, ne peut s'expliquer que par l'heureux accord du roi et du peuple, cimenté par*

leur mutuel respect pour la foi jurée et pour la constitution nationale.

The festivities in Brussels lasted three days, and were attended, besides by myself, also by Prince George, as the representative of the Saxon house. The whole jubilee went off in so truly satisfactory a manner, that I could only regret not being able to accompany the King, when he started on his tour through Belgium, which proved, in the full sense of the word, a triumphal progress for him.

It was not without the heartiest satisfaction, therefore, that he wrote to me: 'I thank you once more for your kind visit, and for the sincere and friendly way in which you have taken part in our festival. For the house, as a whole, it is after all a handsome monument, upon which it can look with some pride.

'We are continuing to celebrate festivities of an extremely beautiful and satisfactory kind. After good old Bruges, came Namur, also extremely enthusiastic, the weather being glorious, though rather too hot. Dinant likewise; Luxembourg was kind and hearty; I saw a part of the country which is very pretty, and was still quite new to me, on the Semoy, adjoining France. Good old Antwerp has distinguished itself quite especially. A new reservoir is being erected there, which has the largest and finest flood-gates that exist until now. Unfortunately, the fine weather has changed to storm and rain. I presume that you are shortly going to Berlin, for the wedding of your brother-in-law.'

The marriage of the Prince Regent of Baden with Princess Louisa of Prussia took place on September 20. I had joined my wife, on the 18th, in Berlin, whither I had repaired straight from the autumn manœuvres in East Prussia, in order to assist, with her, at the happy union of our brother and friend with the spirited and strong-willed daughter of the future King, and—as we had at least not ceased to dream—the future Emperor, of Germany. A few weeks before this event, another sovereign family had been added to the train of relationships now in course of formation; a family which, through its misfortunes and its existence, might, in a measure,

be termed a living protest against the old Europe of the congresses and protocols: the family of Holstein.

I had been requested by the old Duke of Augustenburg to choose a wife for the Crown Prince Frederick, which, considering their position at that time, presented a difficulty that will be easily conceived. I proposed my niece, who was at the same time the niece of the Queen of England, the daughter of Victoria's only sister Ada Hohenlohe, and, on the 11th of September, the marriage was speedily carried out. By this means the heavily oppressed and almost deserted house of Holstein-Augustenburg was brought into the closest connection with one of the most powerful thrones in Europe. In whatever way the Holstein question might be solved, one thing was certain, that it was sure to react very considerably on the affairs of all Germany. The dramatic threads became the less easy to unravel, the more the house of Augustenburg grew into the great and leading families of Europe.

But it was, of course, of incomparably greater importance to the whole circle of new European constellations, that the almost romantic engagement which had taken place in the Scotch Highlands, in the previous year, between Prince Frederick William of Prussia and the young Princess Victoria of England, really came to be fulfilled. Although no one had ever doubted it, people waited with anxious longing for the official word which was to break the spell of deep secrecy, the long observance of which after all only gave opponents an opportunity to cavil, whereas friends were hindered in the open expression of their pleasure.

In April, my brother at last made leastways a half admission, by unsealing, as it is done in the college of cardinals, the lips of those who belonged to his more intimate circle.

'The brevity of my letter,' he wrote on the 4th, 'must be counterbalanced to-day by its contents. The accomplishment of Vicky's confirmation, and the conclusion of peace in Paris, work together in unsealing our lips, and we may now tell our relations, what they have perhaps taken the liberty to imagine without our permission, that Vicky and Fritz William of Prussia are a betrothed couple. You will fully share our joy

at this event, and will need no comment, seeing that all the personages, as well as all the situations, relations, etc., etc., are well known to you. I will now merely mention that, before Vicky has passed her seventeenth birthday, the wedding is not to be thought of, and that, before that time approaches, we do not intend to make any communication to the public, either English or German. It may think, in the meantime, what it likes. Fritz will pay us a visit in May.'

Nearly at the same time, I received the official announcement of the betrothal from the Prince and Princess of Prussia, whose letters afforded, besides the familiar interest, also various glimpses into current political affairs.

'Although,' the Prince wrote, 'I am telling you no news, by hereby officially informing you of the engagement of my son with your niece, the Princess Royal, which is now to be proclaimed in both the Royal Families, still, considering our close relationship, which is now about to become still closer, I could not omit to send you this intimation, and to claim, on behalf of the young couple, the sympathy which my wife and myself are so sure of receiving from you. My son will go to England for the 24th of May. We ourselves hope to pay a visit there in July.

'You will, no doubt, have heard from your brother, that the proclamation of the engagement is only to take place *pro forma* in the respective families, so that the official announcement will be delayed, until Parliament has been duly informed in the coming session.

'So we have peace! The Russian manifesto gilds the pill on all sides. Nevertheless, the humiliation for Russia is of a very serious kind, though also well-merited. The Franco-Russian flirtation is rather too palpable. The intention is obvious! The countries situated in-between this Imperial union *in spe* will now have to be very much on their guard. I should like to know *la vraie pensée* in St Petersburg with regard to the *Te Deum* in Charlottenburg and the Order of the Black Eagle telegraphed to Paris. It is just as if, for

three years, no other bliss had been desired, than that of obtaining peace of such a kind for Russia ! etc.

‘ Your faithful cousin and friend,

‘ PRINCE OF PRUSSIA.’

The Princess of Prussia, too, attached an importance to this union, which was indicative both of its general and its special circumstances, and I think I may be certain of her kind permission, if, for completeness sake, I add here the amiable and gracious note of the Empress Augusta on the marriage of her son. Although it was scarcely intended to be reckoned among political documents, it will still be welcome to posterity, as a memorial of the noble sentiments of the illustrious lady.

‘ COBLENTZ, *the 12th of April.*

‘ DEAR ERNEST,—I am not only satisfying a mere form, but obeying a true impulse of my heart, in expressing to you, in these lines, my delight at the consummation of our dearest hopes, which is now no longer to be concealed : God bless this union, for our children, for our family, and for our poor German fatherland, which can naturally only rise from its present position, in alliance with England. To thank you, our faithful friend, on this occasion, for the many proofs of your sympathy, is a duty which I perform with all the more pleasure, as I am always fond of calling up remembrances of Gotha. I send my best love to your excellent wife. Farewell, and keep your affection for your faithful cousin,

‘ A.’

Prince Frederick William himself described to me, in enthusiastic words, the great happiness he had found in the possession of this amiable creature, and, although it is universally known, I would not omit expressly to confirm, what the correspondence of the bridegroom in those days has vividly recalled to my memory, how entirely this union was a product of the truest and deepest affection on both sides.

I will not enter here into a detailed description of these two excellent people, who were destined by fate for a position exalted even beyond their own expectations, and to whom it was reserved, as it were, to enjoy, as a ripe and secure possession, all that which German patriotism, in those years, regarded as the highest aim of its ideal endeavours. The illustrious couple, as I wrote to my brother at the time, possessed, in the years of their youth, in common all those qualities that enable human beings to awaken ready and lasting love and enthusiasm. The manly and vigorous bearing of the Prince, his frank manner, and his unbiassed view of things, soon won for him the true friendship even of one who was his senior by years. In face of his great gifts, and his rare knowledge and ability, almost the only fear was, that the narrow circle of affairs and activity to which he was confined, might not suffice fully to develope his rich mind, and elevate it still more. It seemed as if the powerful nature of the young man, richly endowed as he was, both in body and in mind, was unable, in the position he then held, to find the congenial occupation that would perfect him.

His by far younger bride possessed a mind capable of fully grasping the intellectual and political interests which Frederick William opened up to her. Richly developed as were the qualities of her heart, she was almost too much advanced in knowledge and skill, and had, in the true sense of the word, ripened in a masculine school. In her, the pedagogic and ethic ideals were in a measure fulfilled, in the setting up of which my brother had, from the earliest times, shown a positively inventive skill. In this respect, the Princess was entirely the pupil of Prince Albert, and she not only always remained the favourite, but, in many things, also the image, of her father. That my brother, besides, also instructed her himself in the positive sciences, and acted, in some subjects, in the full sense of the term as her tutor, was a matter of secondary importance. What peculiarly distinguished her, in early youth, from those of her own age, was her strict adherence to fixed principles a peculiarity which my brother himself

possessed, and which he succeeded in conferring upon his favourite daughter.

With the Princess, therefore, my brother lost also a pedagogic occupation, which had become dear to him, and which had exercised an extremely refreshing influence on his mind. The boys of the family had too little softness, to make any immediate occupation with them agreeable, and the other girls were still too little. Hence the great depression and sadness, which were, for a long time, perceptible in the letters of the Prince, with regard to his separation from the young Princess. The time for the marriage had not been fixed, and my brother adhered to his original determination, not to allow it to take place, before the Princess had accomplished her 17th year.*

During this long interval, I had frequent opportunities of seeing Prince Frederick William. Although I myself was far from seeking an undue influence on the views of the future heir to the Prussian throne, I cannot refrain from saying, that the Princess of Prussia, in letters which I still gratefully preserve at the present day, repeatedly expressed her desire, that I should hold constant intercourse with her son, and particularly discuss political affairs and German questions with him, in exactly the same sense as I had at all times advocated them, in full harmony with the sentiments of Princess Augusta herself.

The views of the Princess of Prussia were at all times very decided on the one point, that it was desirable for her son to avoid a certain one-sidedness in his political intercourse, such as was only too likely to be developed by his exclusive residence in single garrison towns of Prussia. In answer to what the Princess communicated to me on this subject, I wrote to her, among other things:

‘ . . . It lies in the nature of young people, when they have once out-grown the nursery, and follow paths of their own shaping, to take the one or the other course, as it were, instinctively. This applies especially to their more

* I only mention all these family affairs here, inasmuch as it may perhaps not be undesirable to add to, and supplement, the extensive characteristics contained in Martin's work with regard to these matters. Cf. *ibid.* III. chap. 67, 71; IV. chap. 82, 83.

intimate acquaintances, and to their leaning towards one or the other class of individuals. We must wait and see what course the young man intends to take, in order to be able to determine to what people he is most likely to attach himself. To approach, or force oneself upon him, would certainly have the opposite result. Should it, therefore, in this case, be Fritz's desire and intention to seek intercourse with me, you may rest assured, dear cousin, that he could find no truer and more devoted friend, and that my heart would welcome him warmly.

'I am always ready to do any kind of service, whether by imparting counsel, or in whatsoever other respect, if it is asked of me, and if I see the real intention of joining our circle of ideas. In the contrary case, I should consider it positively dangerous for us to seek a greater intimacy than good breeding and the ties of relationship render necessary.

'The physical sufferings of our respected Prince, your consort, the fearful situation which he has to endure, and the burden of affairs, which only fatigue, instead of refreshing, him, are so often the subject of my melancholy thoughts.' . .

At the moment when this correspondence was being carried on, not only relatives and friends were busy in showing their hearty sympathy with the promising and amiable young couple, but all the world, and every newspaper, was full of discussions and prophecies concerning them, and no one in Germany believed otherwise, than that, on the life of these two gifted Royal children, all the blessings depended which were to be expected from the future of the German nation.

No one could imagine a more elevating impression, than that which the newly married pair produced personally on their arrival in Germany, after the wedding had been celebrated in London on the 25th of January, 1858. I can abstain here from giving an account of the events, both in England and in Germany, on the occasion of the long-desired union of the two Royal Families. All these things have been described with the greatest minuteness in Martin's book on the Life of the Prince Consort, nor could anything of import-

ance be added to the details given there, from diaries and letters of the time.

However, I cannot close this chapter of my reminiscences, without mentioning two further scions of the House of Coburg, who entered about the same time into matrimonial alliances, both under the happiest auspices, and without anybody's dreaming of the dark future that was in store for them: Princess Charlotte of Belgium and King Pedro of Portugal, both of them personages endowed with the rarest gifts of intellect and great energy of character.

On the 27th of July, 1857, the marriage of the Archduke Maximilian of Austria with the daughter of King Leopold took place in Brussels, and almost at the same time King Pedro became engaged to a daughter of the Prince of Hohenzollern. Archduke Max had gone on a visit to the English Court in June, and as, in his capacity as Governor of Milan, he possessed great enthusiasm for Italy, and had, at the same time, gained great knowledge of the world, he could not fail to produce an extremely pleasing impression on my brother.

'Archduke Max has been with us since the 14th,' Albert wrote to me on the 21st of June, 1857. 'We have learnt to know in him a very distinguished and promising young man, whom we are pleased to see enter our family through his marriage with Charlotte. His religious tolerance, and his liberal-minded political views, afford some prospect of a happier fate for the Italians, and of peace in that country. He is glad to become more intimately connected with the Coburg family.'

'Under the seal of secrecy, I must tell you of another event, which is interesting to you, and will have an influential bearing on our family. I have been busy, for some time, in arranging a marriage between Don Pedro and the daughter of the Prince of Hohenzollern, who I believe is well known to you. The young lady is said to be pretty and well brought up, and will bring views of life with her, which will not be those of the other old Catholic houses, such as those of Spain and Italy. New blood and German culture, with Prussia and

the North to lean upon, will strike you at once as being the advantages of the selection!!'

Unfortunately, little blessing was to rest on these two alliances. I had hastened to Brussels, on the 25th of July, for the wedding of the Archduke Max, and met my brother there, who had come over to Brussels for a few hours to assist at the chief ceremony on the 27th. My uncle, and even my brother, were exceedingly impressed with the mission which the Archducal pair hoped to be able to fulfil in Milan, with the view to pacifying Italy. Only too soon, however, was the disappointment to set in, which will form the contents of the next chapters of my memoirs.

That, on the other hand, death would so soon and so prematurely dissolve the auspicious marriage between Don Pedro and Princess Stephanie of Hohenzollern, no one would have imagined, who saw the young couple, in the full vigour of life, at their marriage on May 18, 1858.

I had become more intimately acquainted with the distinguished son of my cousin Ferdinand in July, 1854, when he and his younger brother, the present King Louis, paid me a long visit in Reinhardtsbrunn and Coburg. From that time he remained friendly attached to me, until his death on the 17th of November, 1861. When, on September 16, 1855, he assumed the reins of government as an independent sovereign, Portuguese affairs seemed to be advancing towards a vigorous settlement. The whole country bowed before the truly superior intellect of the young monarch, and all the foreign governments looked with the greatest confidence upon the new and firm constitutional power that appeared to be making a new Belgium, as it were, out of this State, which had so long been torn and shaken by conflicting parties.

Of the numerous communications which I received from the young King, I still preserve among my papers a comprehensive memorandum of the 15th of June, 1856, which gives an extraordinary description of the financial and political position of Portugal, and betokens a clearness of mind and a strength of will, which leave me no doubt that Don Pedro would have become one of the most distinguished monarchs

of Europe. The King manipulated the German language with remarkable skill, which suffered but little from a few foreign expressions and constructions of style. He could speak and write, too, with the same ease and facility, in nearly all the languages of the West. His education had been under the influence of Court Councillor Diez, whom I have mentioned before, and who proved also in this case that, in spite of the animosities of the English, his activity was a true blessing for King Ferdinand and the whole Portuguese Royal Family.

In the daughter of the Prince of Hohenzollern, Don Pedro found a wife who was intellectually his equal. Princess Stephanie quickly and intelligently adapted herself to the circumstances of the Romanic South. She supplemented the King in his thoroughly German mode of thinking, and was in return won over by the amiable character of her husband to the sphere of Portuguese ideas.

Before her departure to Lisbon, the Princess visited us with her parents in Gotha, and she left on me and the Duchess an ever memorable impression, which her early death has not impaired.

CHAPTER VII

GENERAL SITUATION AFTER THE CRIMEAN WAR.—NAPOLEON'S CONTINENTAL PLANS.—ENGLAND'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEM.—THE FRENCH REGENCY LAW.—THE PROPOSED UNION OF MOLDAVIA AND WALLACHIA.—LETTER FROM THE DUKE TO PRINCE ALBERT.—THE PRINCE'S ANSWER.—RUSSIA PROPOSES TO SUMMON THE POWERS TO AN AFTER-CONFERENCE.—NAPOLEON'S ITALIAN POLICY.—ENGLAND'S DISAPPROBATION.—COOLNESS BETWEEN FRANCE AND ENGLAND.—LETTER FROM PRINCE CHIMAY.—PILGRIMAGE OF EUROPEAN PRINCES TO PARIS.—THE GRAND-DUKE CONSTANTINE IN PARIS.—EFFECT OF HIS VISIT IN ENGLAND.—THE EMPEROR AND THE EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH IN OSBORNE.—HOW NAPOLEON INFORMS PRINCE ALBERT OF HIS INTENDED MEETING WITH THE EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—CAVOUR AND NAPOLEON.—THE PLOTS OF THE POLITICAL REFUGEES.—THE DUKE IN PARIS.—THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON ON THE POSTAL AND RAILWAY SYSTEM.—THE ATTEMPT ON THE EMPEROR'S LIFE AT THE GRAND OPERA.—ITS POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND.—LETTERS FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—THE QUEEN AND THE PRINCE IN CHERBOURG.—RECONCILIATION BETWEEN NAPOLEON AND PRINCE JEROME.—NAPOLEON'S SECRET TREATY WITH SARDINIA.—AUSTRIA'S ISOLATION.

SOON after the close of the Congress of Paris, my friend Chimay wrote me a few words, which might be employed as a motto for the Imperial policy in the years 1857 and 1858: *Les politesses exagérées de la Russie*, he said at the end of a letter of the 16th of September, 1856, *sont acceptées sous bénéfice d'inventaire. On n'y ajoute qu'une confiance illimitée, mais au fond elles plaisent.*

Although Napoleon was far from wishing to surrender the friendship of England, he had convinced himself that the English neither could, nor would, assist him in his continental plans. Everything he had to hear from England, became

extremely inconvenient to him, for, as to the chief questions of Napoleon's programme, Poland and Italy, both the English Court and the Cabinet observed a striking reserve. All interests in England were exclusively concentrated in Eastern affairs, the more so, as the Indian mutiny just appeared to be disclosing the sorest side of the ocean-ruling nation, and the idea was beginning to dawn upon her, that Russia might one day endanger the position of the English in Asia.

Under these circumstances, England was just as persistent in demanding that the Russians should strictly fulfil the stipulations of peace, as the French were on their part inclined, in many points, to allow such interpretations as were most agreeable to the Northern Power. Lord Palmerston wrote the most voluminous and serious diplomatic notes, now about the true and the false Bolgrad, whose doubtful situation on the maps had plunged Parisian diplomatists into grave delusions, now about the importance of the Serpent's Island for the navigation of the Danube, and now again about the demolition of the fortifications of Kars, Ismail, and Reni. There was an irritability and an agitation in everything the English Cabinet undertook with regard to Russia, that the Emperor of the French had no difficulty in representing himself as the real pillar of the peace of Europe.

Various reasons seemed to render it advisable for the Emperor to preserve the tranquillity of the Globe for some time. After the conclusion of peace, the extravagant speculation in the money-market soon led to a crisis, which reacted on commerce and industry, and impoverished the working classes in France. manifold symptoms of conspiracies in Paris and in the provinces kept the police in continual motion, and, as there were repeated reports of happily frustrated attempts on the life of the Emperor, the Stock Exchange classes gradually became accustomed to take systematic advantage of the rumours that were thus incessantly hovering in the air. On the life of the French monarch depended, according to most people's notions, the peace and order of Europe.

The Italian emigrants in London and Switzerland were actually determined to do away with the Emperor, and

Tibaldi's, Bartolini's, Grilli's, and Pianori's, attempts on his life appeared to confirm the opinion of Cavour, that the revolution could only be prevented by a liberated Italy. At the French Court itself, a 'red party' was talked of, which thwarted the conservative and loyal intentions of the Emperor. The wishes and claims of Italy, which had been proclaimed in mighty words at the Congress, but had not been listened to by the Powers, found representatives amongst the nearest relatives of the Emperor, and ever ready advocates in Prince Jerome and Count Morny. That Cavour, before leaving the Congress, had spoken frankly and unreservedly with the Emperor, seemed quite sufficient, in the opinion of the world, to necessitate the latter's following up his moral approbation of Sardinian policy in course of time with actual assistance.

In addition to general political questions, there was a grave dispute in the family of the Emperor himself about a Regency law, which circumstances seemed to render urgently necessary. In July, 1856, it came to bad scenes between the Emperor and Prince Napoleon, who considered himself set aside, because, according to one project, the princes of the family were excluded from the council of the regency, whilst Count Morny was in the general opinion secretly designated as Regent.

On connaît trop l'absolutisme de Sa Majesté, surtout en pareille matière, Prince Chimay wrote to me. He thought it plausible, that Prince Napoleon should threaten to resign his seat in the Senate, and declare that he would rather go into voluntary exile again, far from France :

'Quoiqu'il en soit,' Prince Chimay added, 'Votre Altesse reconnaîtra dans ces faits une nouvelle preuve de tiraillements de tous genres qui se produisent chaque jour autour et dans le sein même du gouvernement Impérial. On l'a dit et je le répète avec une conviction croissante : . Ce repos est incompatible avec le caractère français, et la paix sera bien plus difficile à maintenir que l'état de guerre.'

During the summer, the wildest rumours had been purposely spread in Paris, not only about the physical health of

the Emperor, but also about the state of his mind. People went so far as to say, that an article of the *Constitutionnel*, in which it was asserted that Socrates had suffered from hallucinations, pursued no other purpose than that of preparing France for the mental aberration of her illustrious head. Meanwhile, owing to the state of affairs in Italy and Spain and the unsolved questions in the East, men were in a state of constant anxiety and expectation of war.

With regard to the affairs of the Danubian Principalities, I myself was to some extent concerned, the rumour having been spread in one or two political circles in Vienna, that France and England had determined to erect a throne on the Lower Danube. But I need hardly say that, so far as my person was brought into connection with this question, there existed, at no time, and in nobody's mind, even the slightest intention of expecting a sacrifice of such a kind from me.

Unfortunately, my *Chargé d'Affaires* in Vienna had not checked this idle talk promptly and firmly enough, and I myself had been informed of it too late. My strict instructions to contradict the thing, could no longer prevent the empty combination from maintaining the field for a while.

As a matter of fact, however, it was quite correct that the Western Powers were more and more earnestly bent on uniting Moldavia and Wallachia into one Roumanian principality, whereas Austria saw nothing but dangers and difficulties in the establishment of such a State. If it is remembered that, two years previously, I had been commissioned to propose to the Emperor of Austria that he should acquire these two provinces for his house, and that all idea of such a combination was coldly rejected in Vienna, the difficult position in which Austria was placed by the conclusion of peace in Paris, could not be expressed more plainly, than by the fact that she now feared to see an Eastern Piedmont rise up in Roumania.

It was not without an ulterior object, that the candidature of two other German Princes had been discussed, whose intimate relations to myself made it desirable for me to enter into communication on the subject with my brother. I therefore wrote to London, on the 17th July :

‘What I am writing to you about to-day, concerns a matter of politics and a direct question. There is a good deal of talk about the Danubian Principalities receiving a German Prince as Regent, whether under Turkish *suzerainty*, or *souveraine* is still undecided. It is said, that you English and the Emperor Napoleon would like Prince Nicholas of Nassau. I know from Berlin, that they have the Crown Prince of Augustenburg in their eye there. In Vienna, they want neither of the two. The matter would not concern me at all, as the Danubian Principalities in themselves have nothing to do with Germany. But both candidates are friends of mine, and belong, with so many others, to the closer circle which unites political views and patriotic feelings in Germany. Both the young people have received hints from various sides. Both, too, are intimate friends of one another, and neither of them desires to prejudice the other in any way. There are other opinions *pro* or *contra*, and there is nowhere any certainty as to how far the aforementioned Governments really mean to give effect to their views. I should look upon it as a great proof of confidence on your part, if you were to tell me the plain truth of the matter, in so far as it concerns you. Stockmar says he knows nothing of the matter.

‘As to us others, we are decidedly of opinion that Augustenburg should not be chosen for that position, nor will you be in any doubt as to the reason for putting forward this candidate. So much is certain, the two Princes must not be compromised *vis-à-vis* of one another. If I know your views, it will be easy for me to give effect to them in our own way.

‘The fact is, you must show me a little confidence in the matter, and you may rest assured that, in this affair, as in every other, if I can approve of it from our German standpoint, I shall act entirely in accordance with your wishes. This utter uncertainty, however, is not only painful to me, but deprives me of every possibility of counteracting endeavours, which are just as unpleasant to us, as they perhaps are to you. Pardon my frankness, and let me hear from you on the subject.’

My brother’s answer fully indicated the views of the

Powers with regard to the Roumanian question, which, as is well-known, only found its unfortunate solution, after three years, in the election of Prince Cusa. But I consider it superfluous to enter here into the further details of the matter. After receiving my letter, my brother wrote to me, on the 24th of July, as follows :

‘I have safely received your letter of the 17th inst. The stories which are being hawked about in Germany, are all invented. The affair of the Principalities is still quite in embryo. A commission of the Powers is to effect their organisation. France desires that they should be united, and that the Powers should announce this decision to them. Russia is willing. Austria and the Porte do not want the union, and the former insists that the question of the union should be formally excluded from the subjects to be discussed by the Divan of the Principalities. We are resisting both these courses. We adhere to the protocol, in which it is stated that the wishes of the Principalities are to be consulted, and insist on the principle that no obstacle should be offered to the free expression of the Divan’s will, as no arrangement promises to last in the future, that is not based on the wishes of the nation itself.

‘Whether the nation desires the union or not, it has not yet been possible to ascertain. The Porte wants an elective kingdom, with Hospodars for life, of which three should be proposed to, and one selected by, the Porte. Our Ministry inclines to this suggestion. I am declaiming against it, because it would be a repetition of Polish history, the origin of endless intrigues, and the ultimate division between Austria and Russia. I believe the hereditary principle will carry the day, but that the Governor, or Governors, will be placed in such a position, that they cannot emancipate themselves from Turkey as independent sovereigns, as the whole war and subsequent peace, had, after all, merely the integrity of Turkey for their object. Russia insists that the Regent, or Regents, should be of the *Greek* religion. But whether he, or they, are to be chosen from the country itself, or whether a foreign Prince is to be selected, is uncertain. In the first case, we should get

uncivilised, intriguing fellows; in the second case, we must think of the smaller German Courts . . . at the mention of which, people here at once exclaim: "What? Another King Otto? We have enough with one." What ideas they have on the subject in Paris, I don't know. I have often mentioned Prince Nicholas of Nassau . . .

'Now you have the whole matter before you, and you will see from it, that it will be long before there can really be any question of candidatures.

'Ever, etc.'

In the month of September, the disagreement of the Powers described in the foregoing letter, afforded a suitable occasion for the Russian Cabinet to propose calling the Powers to an after-conference in Paris, in order to settle those points which had not been cleared up at the Congress. In a Note which Brunnow delivered to Count Walewski on the 27th of October, the necessity of finally solving the pending questions, by calling together the signatory Powers, was pointed out, and complaint made of the imperfect carrying out of the treaty of peace. In the question of the Danubian Principalities especially, Austria was accused of purposely protracting the occupation, and thereby violating article 31, which had demanded the evacuation of Turkish territory by all foreign troops within six months.

France was willing to enter into a sort of continuation of the Congress. A difference which had just arisen between the Emperor and Lord Palmerston, concerning the occupation of the territory of Naples, seemed to warrant the French Government in putting an end to all further considerations for England. The Emperor of the French had, already at that date, sufficiently comprehended the feeling of Russia, and knew that she would leave him freedom of action in all points of his programme, with the exception of the Polish question. Louis Napoleon, therefore, did not hesitate for a moment to give the Russians every assurance that he would not touch this wound again, and Russia tacitly left it to the Emperor to decide the fate of Italy.

In Sardinia, meanwhile, Count Cavour had skilfully and successfully managed that the affairs of the peninsula should not for one instant be struck off the political orders of the day. Scarcely had people heard of the after-conferences, when it was demanded on all sides, that those subjects should be considered again, which had been left unsettled at the Congress.

Endeavours to profit by this opportunity were also made by Denmark, which had no longer any prospect of seeing the complaints of the states of Holstein simply buried in the German Diet. No sooner, therefore, had the after-conferences been taken in view by Russia, than the Danish Government at once declared its determination to submit the Holstein question, which, as an European one, would have to be discussed as it is, to the Paris Congress.

In Germany, great fears were entertained, that, here, too, Napoleon might show himself in favour of Russia's influence and interests, and therefore meet the wishes of the Danes. I was consequently requested, on many sides, to use my influence in Paris, to prevent the Emperor from making any promises in this respect. Through Prince Chimay, I once more adverted to the Holstein question, which I had often discussed with the Emperor, and was confidentially informed, that the French Government in no way intended to support the misrule of Denmark in the Duchies.

Whilst the German Diet was just beginning to adopt more decided measures against the Danes, it became evident to me, for the first time in foreign politics, that this affair appeared, after all, gradually to be regarded from a different point of view to that in 1852. In the attitude of the Emperor of the French, a perceptible change had taken place, since my endeavours had convinced him, that he could not hurt the national feeling in Schleswig-Holstein, without bringing all Germany up in arms against him.

But Napoleon feared nothing more than a hostile feeling in Germany, at the moment when his Italian policy was necessarily bringing him more and more into violent collision with Austria. The Emperor's determination, of which I had

long been aware, to turn the edge of his daily increasing power against Austria, was growing more and more perceptible.

England was dissatisfied with this political attitude of Louis Napoleon. Whilst the ideas of Italian independence had formerly met with undivided sympathy in that country, people now observed a rather cool demeanour there towards everything that appeared to be connected with Cavour's policy. If the influence of French policy in Italy was formerly looked upon as too reactionary, it had now fallen into disfavour, because it was beginning to turn against the treaties of Europe.

The personal affection for the dynasties of Italy had, it is true, by no means increased at the English Court, and it was significant enough, that the proposed visit to Balmoral of the hereditary Grand Duke of Tuscany, during his stay in 1856, was politely declined, 'because,' as my brother wrote to me, 'we do not want to stamp our little resort as the rendezvous of European potentates.' Nevertheless, Napoleon's connection with the Italian cause was, for all that, not viewed with less disfavour and disapproval. People saw, in this conspicuous tendency of the Emperor, mainly a swerving round towards Russia, and the Imperialistic flirtation with detested Russianism cast a drop, bitter as wormwood, into the alliance of the Western Powers.

My brother could not find words strong enough to express his disapprobation of this fickleness of the French, and his letters were full of harsh remarks against Napoleon and his friendliness towards Russia.

'In politics,' he wrote, on the 5th of October, 'things look confused. Russia has evidently suffered more than she likes to admit, and needs a few years of repose, but merely in order then to take up her game again. Meanwhile, she is endeavouring to break up the Western Alliance, for which purpose she finds excellent material in the roguery of the French State officials, and the good-humoured indifference of their sovereign towards all things that are in course of development. We here are easily placed with

our backs to the wall, because we are governed by fixed principles.'

Under these circumstances, it could not be concealed for long in Paris, that France no longer stood on the old footing with England, and it sounded to me like an unconscious echo of the just quoted words of my brother, when, some time later, Prince Chimay reported to me :

L'alliance anglaise acceptée comme nécessité est encore sur les lèvres, mais elle n'est plus dans le cœur. Non pas que l'Empereur, très Anglais, ne soit vraiment affectionné à la Reine, mais je parle ici du cabinet et de l'Empereur représentant le sentiment national. Il me paraît impossible, Monseigneur, que si Lord Palmerston reste au pouvoir et continue à soulever partout le sentiment démagogique, le refroidissement ne dégénère avant peu en rupture complète. Voici ce qu'on m'écrit de Paris : 'Les positions s'altèrent et n'ont guère de netteté,' les conférences qui vont avoir lieu s'engageront sous de fâcheuses influences. L'attitude de la Russie dans la haute Asie, en présence de l'Angleterre qui a déclaré la guerre à la Perse ; la langage que tient le gouvernement Français au sujet de Neufchâtel ; ne sont pas de nature à disposer les esprits à la conciliation. L'Angleterre, en particulier, arrivera aux conférences avec des griefs de plus d'un genre, et tous les autres gouvernements, excepté ceux d'Autriche et de Piémont, avec des griefs contre elle.

Ce tableau est assez exact, Monseigneur. Il faut y ajouter l'irritation profonde des démagogues et ne pas oublier qu'à l'égard de tous les trônes leur mot d'ordre est l'assassinat.

In spite of all the distrust which sprung up against French policy, it cannot be denied, however, that the prestige of the Empire had never risen higher than it did now. A singular mixture of propriety and fear determined most of the reigning families no longer to delay the payment of the honours which French Imperialism had so long and so earnestly desired. The appearance of Prince Frederick William, then already Victoria's betrothed, in December 1856, at the Court of the Emperor, was the signal for a regular pilgrimage of reigning sovereigns and princes to Paris. All at once, there was a regular race among the old houses of Europe to pay courtesies

of every description in the Tuileries. I should be afraid of exhausting the patience of my readers, were I to relate everything that was said, or overheard, within the walls of the Tuileries during the year 1857, and which appears to have made the round of Europe in letters and confidential documents.

Since Russia and France had been exchanging loving looks, the visits of high society to Paris were watched and recorded with almost jealous eyes. But the greatest and most painful sensation was caused in England, when it became certain that the Grand Duke Constantine would appear in Paris, a fact that almost had a more stirring effect on the cabinet and the nation, than the news of a revolution on the Continent.

The Emperor of the French had himself announced the impending event to the Queen, and my brother had to consult with Clarendon and Palmerston, what answer should be given to so important a communication. Greatly edified by the Prince's draft on this great affair, the two Ministers declared, that the letter would be likely to open the Emperor's eyes to the consequences of his flattering behaviour towards Russia.

But the Emperor of France had no intention of renouncing the halo which he obtained in the eyes of the French through this Russian visit. Palmerston revenged himself by doing as if he had to go back in the Eastern questions to England's old ally Austria. The old sinner now found it in his heart to overwhelm Count Buol in Vienna with the most touching flatteries.

Meanwhile, the Grand Duke Constantine was really present in Paris, and, for a fortnight, engaged the curiosity and the interest of the public. When he took his leave the Emperor said to him: *'qu'il était triste de se séparer quand on commençait à se connaître, à s'apprécier, sans savoir si on se reverrait jamais.* The Grand Duke, who had not been very satisfied during the first week of his stay, seems to have departed with somewhat better impressions.

Nor was the French public at that time much inclined to give up the aversion which, since the days of Moscow, it had always entertained against everything that was Russian.

And, though even in the nation itself, the friendship of Russia was sought with instinctive ambition, men were nevertheless very apt to give too ready expression to their harsh views of individual Russians.

When General Bosquet was asked by somebody, what impression the Grand Duke had produced upon him, he said, according to an account of Prince Chimay, in the frank manner which he rarely repressed: *Il me produit l'effet d'un homme peint, comme la plupart des Russes. Beaucoup de vernis sur du bois grossier; il m'aurait plu davantage s'il nous avait moins parlé de notre valeur. Il a été trop flagorneur, l'armée n'aime pas cela.*

The visit of the Grand Duke Constantine was scarcely an exception from the purely decorative significance which most of these meetings had received on the part of the Emperor. He knew exactly how to choose the personages with whom he discussed the political situation, and skilfully managed to bring others into surroundings, where it was not easy for them to look into the Emperor's cards. Very characteristic in this respect, was what Prince Chimay observed with regard to the visit of the King of Bavaria, who was staying in Fontainebleau at the same time:

Sa Majesté [he is speaking of Maximilian II] est physiquement très raide; mais moralement très disposé à se montrer aimable. Je doute que son esprit, éminemment littéraire et artistique, trouve à s'exercer (en égard à la société réunie pour lui faire honneur) autrement que sur les historiques et poétiques murailles de ce magnifique château. La cour va s'installer à St Cloud la semaine prochaine. Sa Majesté Bavaroise restera à Paris.

On ne peut s'imaginer combien au fond l'Empereur attache d'importance à toutes ces démonstrations de l'Europe monarchique. J'ai souvent eu l'occasion de signaler cette heureuse faiblesse que l'Europe n'a pas su apprécier assez tôt, mais qu'il est bon de ne pas oublier à l'occasion.

Whilst, in this way, care was taken of the dignity of the Emperor, both in Europe and among the French, a sort of

standstill was perceptible in politics, which Napoleon himself favoured. All attempts at solving the questions which had been left open at the Paris Congress, by means of Conferences, failed, and not one of those points which England desired to see settled, was advanced by a single step.

In the Danubian Principalities, Austria, Russia, and Turkey, vied in opposing one another, and Napoleon confined himself to preventing the question from being settled at all. His real intentions were directed towards Italy, but he believed the preparations for action to be still far from completed, and he restrained, and put off, his Sardinian allies from spring to spring.

At a moment when the question of the Danubian Principalities in Constantinople was nearly leading to a break-off of diplomatic relations on the part of Russia, France, and Sardinia, Louis Napoleon sought a personal meeting with the Queen of England and my brother. On the 6th of August, the Emperor and the Empress paid a visit to the English Royal Family in Osborne. In order to give no occasion for misconstructions, the Queen thought it necessary to invite the Ministers Clarendon and Palmerston to be present at Court during the whole visit of the French guests. Notwithstanding, the most detailed political conversation which probably took place at all at that time, was held in quite a confidential way between Napoleon and my brother on a walk which they took in each other's company.

The contents of this remarkable conversation, as is well-known, were noted down with the greatest accuracy by Prince Albert, and are now accessible to every one.*

But what came least of all to the knowledge of politicians at the time, was the circumstance that the English view of the situation, with which my brother entirely identified himself, was not only not shaken by Napoleon's eloquence, but the creeping discord between the two Powers was rather increased and strengthened by the visit of the French Emperor.

That Louis Napoleon, when in Osborne, personally found and took occasion to inform the English Royal Family that

* 'Life of the Prince Consort,' iv. 101, etc.

he would shortly have a meeting with the Emperor Alexander in Stuttgart, probably provoked my brother all the more, the less the form of the communication enabled him to offer any objections. The Emperor managed to turn the conversation so skilfully, that Prince Albert could avowedly do no more than approve of the pretended exchange of courtesies between the friend and the enemy of England.

In Germany, the feelings were naturally very mixed, when the news spread of the impending meeting of the two Emperors in Stuttgart.

The Emperor of Austria endeavoured to arrange a meeting with the Emperor Alexander in Weimar, where it was intended that every vestige of an estrangement between the two Powers should disappear, and the steadfastness of the old European alliances be demonstrated.

I could not help thinking that these Imperial journeys at this juncture, had altogether very little significance, and least of all could I believe that they would lead to any sort of settlement with regard to the pending political questions. As I was just then going to the Tyrol, I could not refrain from writing to my brother, in a playful tone: 'We are now getting out of the way of all troubles and annoyances, and are going to the Alps. It is to be hoped that the glaciers there will not melt from all the declarations of love exchanged at the meeting of the Emperors.'

My brother, however, whose views were influenced by the distrust with which Napoleon had inspired him in Osborne, looked at the matter in a very serious and wrathful spirit, and wrote, on the 9th of October: 'The interviews of the Emperors must have carried a pretty confusion into German affairs. The events are still too fresh to allow of our recognising their effect, and perhaps their purpose. In Paris, I already see the unhappy delusion springing up, that the German nation has manifested great enthusiasm for Napoleonism. That much was *discussed*, I don't believe. The visit of the second Imperial couple will have rather startled the French Emperor, and may perhaps have reminded him of what I told him in Osborne, that his strength lay in the break-up of the

old Northern alliance against France, which the Eastern war had brought about; but that the moment he attempted to ally himself with Russia, he would force Austria to make her peace with Russia, in fact, to place herself under Russia's rule, and that this would be an easy matter, whereas he possessed no materials for his Franco-Russian alliance, except by disturbing the peace of Europe, which nobody was inclined to do. If Count Buol is sacrificed, my prediction will be fulfilled, and L. N. will have served to throw Austria back into the arms of Russia.'

It was easy to see that my brother over-estimated the meetings of the three Emperors, for, in inner politics, they produced not the slightest change. Count Buol was not sacrificed in Austria, nor was the Czar able to separate Napoleon entirely from his old English ally. Napoleon always declared with the same frankness, that the conditions of Europe were untenable, and, as to the point where he was threatening the treaties most, he was well aware that England would be the last place where he would meet with any serious reproach, as it was just there where, for years, the 'emancipation of Italy' had been both openly and secretly favoured. Should the sympathies for this oppressed nation have now suddenly diminished, because the Emperor of the French was more and more openly avowing them?

It is true, that the Power which was ever urging and pushing forward, little Sardinia and her great Minister, had, in the previous year, made bad experiences in England; but Cavour reckoned more on the feelings of the English, the existence of which Clarendon himself had admitted in Paris, than on the official assurances of the English Cabinet in favour of the maintenance of European peace. Thus Victor Immanuel was able, step by step, to prepare the emancipation of Italy, which his Ministers, with a boldness hardly heard of before, advocated and vindicated, diplomatically and officially, in all the Cabinets of Europe, declaring that the only choice that now remained, was whether it should come in the form of international justice, or in the fearful shape of revolution and regicide.

For the correctness of the latter alternative, there was no lack of powerful testimony. Like an international power in themselves, Mazzini and his companions went to work unimpeded by the English Government, and carried out their plots with the greatest security, just in the very country where the mere fact of the French Emperor's pursuing his own policy in the question of the Danubian Principalities and in Piedmont was construed as a breach of the alliance.

The emigrants had been in a state of feverish activity ever since the end of the Crimean war. French anarchists and Mazzinists had combined with one another to produce an outbreak of the revolution in France and Italy. However, their ways did not always go together. Some of the most radical sects would not unconditionally submit to Mazzini's command. In the execrable crime which was being hatched in London, with fearful deliberation, ever since the end of the year 1857, Frenchmen, and not Mazzinists, stood in the foreground. It was only an accident, that Orsini and his companions had just then quarrelled with the 'old man of the mountain,' and refused to obey him. Their connection with Bernard no doubt gave the first impulse to the plan of a personal attempt on the life of the Emperor. But the French emigrants had, apart from, and independently of, the intention of Orsini and his associates, prepared an act on their own account, which was to take place all over France, about the middle of January.

The existence and the connection of this conspiracy of French Radicalism against the Empire is wrapped in deep obscurity, and will probably always remain so. The imperfect accounts of the proceedings against Orsini and his associates absorbed the whole interest of the public after the attempt. The wider connection of the conspiracy the Government itself had good reason to conceal, as it was more than probable that a number of persons would have been compromised, who were in close connection with the nearest surroundings of the Imperial Family.

Out of regard for these inner circumstances of France, the rottenness of which an impartial investigation would have

brought to light with dangerous clearness, a further sifting of the revolution planned for the 12th of January was abstained from, and people were satisfied that the attempt, in all its details, bore outwardly a purely Italian character, which even afforded an opportunity to employ the unfortunate incident in foreign politics.

Of the terrible circumstances which accompanied the attempt of the Italians, no further mention was made, nor, indeed, of the intended French revolution; and, if the historical accounts, which are mostly copied from the official reports of those days, were to be relied upon, I could say that the world possesses an Orsini legend which agrees very imperfectly with the reality of the events, of which I was destined by an accident to become a close eye-witness.

Towards the end of December, I had determined to visit Paris on my way to the wedding of my niece Victoria with Prince Frederick William of Prussia, in January 1858. I therefore informed Prince Chimay, that I intended to arrive in Paris on the 12th, and remain there until the 15th. On the 8th of January, I wrote to the Emperor, and was at once invited by him to reside in the Tuileries. But I preferred to take up my quarters with Prince Chimay, as I had done before. Previous to my departure, I informed King Leopold of the programme of my journey, and said that I had chosen the route over Paris, because I considered it my duty, on this fitting occasion, to pay my respects to the Emperor, who had always shown me so much kindness.

I arrived in Paris on the morning of Tuesday the 12th, and heard afterwards, from a more reliable source, that just on this day a general rising had been expected in the capital and in the provinces. On the same 12th of January, Bernard had held a public speech in London, which was full of allusions to the events that were just going to take place in France. The French police took no notice of these disclosures on the part of the daring agitator. In consequence, the Minister Billault was afterwards blamed in France for having so exclusively kept his eye on the conspiracies of the Legitimists and Orleanists, as to give free scope to the anarchists and red republicans.

To all appearances, the greatest tranquillity and content reigned in Paris, and the Emperor was in the best of spirits. On my seeing him again, for the first time, he only expressed his regret at the tension, so extremely unpleasant to him, which was becoming more and more perceptible in the relations between the two Western nations, and the origin of which, he pretended, was unintelligible to him. He spoke with the greatest esteem of the English Cabinet, and of each individual Minister, and dwelt with evident pleasure on his visit to Osborne, and his exhaustive academic discussions with Prince Albert. It was long since I had seen him so cheerful and fresh, both in body and in mind. Not the shadow of any discontent or anxiety appeared to be disturbing his political position, or his domestic peace.

The Emperor had invited me to shoot in the preserves of Fontainebleau on the following Thursday, the 14th. We were to start from the station at nine o'clock in the morning. It was one of the clearest and sunniest of winter days, the thermometer registered about 13 degrees above zero, and we were able to look forward to some good sport. On arriving at the station, I found a number of gentlemen in white chokers, who seemed destined to travel with us to Fontainebleau, but were evidently not sporting guests. When the Emperor arrived at the station, a few minutes after me, he presented the gentlemen to me. They were higher railway officials, and a few money-princes. He had summoned them to attend here, he said, in order that he might discuss on the journey a few questions and projects concerning railway and postal affairs, which were of the greatest importance, and upon which he would like to know the opinion of these gentlemen.

The latter, however, did not seem to be altogether pleased at this intimation of the Emperor's. After we had taken our seats in the saloon carriage, the Emperor, with a jocose preamble, commenced to speak of the necessity of facilitating travelling for the public. He said that the railways were far from fulfilling their real object, and that the traffic of individuals was much too expensive, in comparison

with that of goods and letters. He would therefore make a suggestion, and propound the question, whether it were not possible, without distinction of distances, to effect the conveyance of an individual, on one and the same ticket, from any given centre to the periphery of a certain circle; that is to say, in such wise, that people should be allowed to travel on all lines from Paris to the French frontier, it being left to the discretion of the passenger whether he made greater or smaller use of his railway ticket. The Emperor thought this was a natural application of the principle of the postage stamp to the passenger traffic. He then took occasion to defend the introduction of international postage stamps, and discussed at some length the many difficulties that had been artificially created in our postal and railway system.

Like in everything he applied his mind to, the Emperor showed, here too, an unmistakable foresight. But, in the means which he used to suggest for the attainment of his ends, there was a certain want of clearness, which made it easy for the experts to oppose him, and prove the impossibility of carrying out his ideas. The matter was debated long and vehemently, without the Emperor's owning himself beaten, and without his appearing at all fatigued or annoyed. When the discussion had to be broken off, owing to our arrival in Fontainebleau, the Emperor, in getting out, said to me in the best humour in German: 'In France, the word "impossible" is met with much oftener than anywhere else, but I don't consider myself refuted.'

The chase took its course, and, in honour of the fine winter's day, we also lunched in the open air. We only returned to Paris in the afternoon, and it had grown dark, when we arrived at the *gare du midi*. The Emperor insisted on driving me himself to my lodging, which was situated on the Quai Malaquais. To this end, we had to cross the Seine by the Pont Neuf. As we drove past the monument of Henry IV, the Emperor, after a short silence, made the following remark with reference to the statue of the King: Of all attempts at assassination, only that with the dagger is dangerous, for the murderer surrenders his own life in per-

petrating it. In every other attempt on the life of a sovereign, the traitor has still some hope of saving himself by flight.*

It will easily be conceived, that these words of the Emperor, uttered a few hours before one of the most fearful attempts at assassination that have ever occurred, impressed themselves deeply on my memory, and appeared to me afterwards almost like a wonderful presentiment, which, however, stood in complete contrast with the rare cheerfulness and tranquillity of mind enjoyed by the Emperor on that eventful day. Nothing, therefore, astonished me more, than the news which was afterwards spread, that the Emperor had on this very day been warned by the police director Pietri of an anticipated attempt on his life.

When we had arrived at Chimay's house, the Emperor invited me to visit the Grand Opera with him after dinner. The Empress, he said, would, after a long interval, appear with him to-day for the first time again in the theatre. He offered to fetch me himself, which I declined, however, owing to the long round the Emperor would have been obliged to make in doing so. I rather asked permission to await him at the Opera, and drove there, after half past-nine, in the Imperial carriage which had been placed at my disposal.

A short time before, as is well-known, a special entrance to the old Opera house had been built for the use of the Emperor, in order the better to obviate the dangers of any attempt on his life. This gate-way gave access to a little hall, whence a not very spacious stair-case led straight to the Imperial box. The only approach was from the Rue Pelletier, where the carriages turned into a little blind alley, at the end of which the private entrance to the theatre was situated.

At the Rue Pelletier, a company of infantry had shut off

* The foregoing remarks, as well as those that follow, had long been committed to paper, when I read, in the recently published work of a French diplomatist, the following sentence with reference to Pianori's attempt on the Emperor's life: 'L'Empereur continua sa promenade au pas, sans manifester d'émotion; le pistolet ne l'effrayait pas, il ne redoutait que le poignard, car ceux qui s'en servent, disait-il, ne tremblent pas, ils ont, d'avance, fait le sacrifice de leur vie.' It is to be concluded herefrom, that Napoleon's remark to me, which was made in almost identical words, must have been frequently repeated. As, however, the author of that work generalises the fact of Napoleon's fear of the dagger (his remark to me was made with respect to Henry IV) I may possibly have been the source of that story myself.

the little alley, so that none of the general public could gain access to it. Along the houses opposite the theatre, about twenty to twenty-five policemen had been stationed, who were easily recognisable by their three-cornered hats and short blue mantles. The windows of the neighbouring houses, which opened into the alley, were all lighted up by gas-flames, like at an illumination, and at each window a policeman was visible.

Before the entrance into the blind alley, my carriage—which, as an Imperial State carriage, with two servants on the footboard, was easily distinguishable—was obliged to proceed at a walking pace, owing to the dense crowd of people in the Rue Pelletier. Just as the company stationed there wheeled about to let me pass, I noticed an individual who seized hold of the bridle of the horses. The carriage was arrested for a few seconds, and I heard some one mention my name. Without taking any notice, I descended the next instant at the stair-case of the theatre, where I was received by General Fleury and three other persons belonging to the Imperial intendancy of the theatre. Instead of going upstairs into the box, I stayed in the open air, in response to the General's suggestion that we should smoke a cigar until the Emperor arrived.

The evening was as mild as if we were in the South, and the cloudless moonlight night seemed to invite us to lounge a little longer up and down in front of the theatre. Involuntarily, the conversation turned upon the precautionary measures which had lately been adopted here, and General Fleury declared, with great vivacity, that, owing to the arrangements now made, the safety of the Emperor was so great, that to perpetrate an attempt at this house, like the last one at the Opera Comique, was scarcely possible.

And, indeed, I can truthfully aver that, on that fatal evening, not a single person was to be seen in the alley, who had not evidently some office to perform there.

Meanwhile, the cry '*vive l' Empereur*' sounded from the Rue Pelletier. From the order of the officer commanding the company at the entrance, and the beating of the drums, it was

to be gathered that the Emperor would drive up in another instant.

We threw our cigars away, and re-entered the hall. At that moment, we heard a detonation, which at first gave me the impression as if the company had fired. We turned to the door, to see what had happened. In the same instant, a second bomb exploded under the approaching carriage of the Emperor, by which the coachman, horses, servants, and lancers of the escort, were knocked down. Cries sounded from the street, and the lamentations of the wounded were heard, intermingled with cries for help. I was still standing there, petrified with horror, when the Emperor and the Empress rushed in. They seemed about to fall. The Empress seized me, as it were, mechanically, by the arm, and said, pretty calmly: *Sauvez-moi!* The Emperor was like one stunned; he staggered, and I thought he was wounded. His hat was a little knocked in, and torn on one side by a bullet. But, before I had collected myself, and could take in the situation, a third and still more fearful explosion followed quite close to us. The bomb must have been thrown straight at the door of the hall. Fragments of the petard, and bullets, smashed the windows, and rebounded from the ceiling.

Curiously enough, directly after the Emperor and Empress, a number of people had forced their way into the inner room, as if by magic, and amongst them not a few wounded. I dragged the Empress, whom I had on my arm, away with me, and recollect having knocked down some person who blocked the way, as I was endeavouring to reach the stair-case leading to the box. The Emperor appeared at a loss to know in which direction to turn. Then he followed us up the stairs, and at last we all reached the box.

In the meantime, the acting and singing had commenced in the theatre. We just entered, to hear the oath in the Rutli scene in William Tell. A series of scenes out of various operas was being given, and Ristori was to appear in the death scene in Marie Stuart. In the first *entr'acte*, during which the whole audience must have already heard of the attempt, as the wounded were receiving their first bandages

in the corridors of the theatre, the Emperor and the Empress stepped to the front of the box. But they met with no reception. Not a hand stirred, not a sound was raised. The Emperor said to me in German: 'There you see the Parisians, —they are never treated harshly enough.'

The Empress, after having convinced herself that she and the Emperor were *entirely* unhurt, had regained her full composure. The Emperor, on the other hand, remained in a fearful state of excitement; he was very pale, and showed a nervous trembling which alarmed me. The situation was a fearful one, because nobody could judge of what might be occurring meanwhile in the streets of Paris. At last, Marshal Vaillant entered. The Emperor ordered him to alarm the garrison, and to station troops in accordance with the rules provided in case of riots.

In the course of the evening, two unexploded bombs were picked up, numerous fragments and little leaden bullets brought and shown, and reports made on the number of killed and wounded. The first of the Ministers and dignitaries, who gradually all came to congratulate the Emperor, and place themselves at his service, was the Minister of Police, Pietri. The Emperor rushed at him. The little man looked very pale, and his features were quite distorted. *Eh bien*, said the Emperor. *Nous ne savons rien du tout*, the Police Minister replied again and again to the pressing questions of the Emperor, whereupon the latter turned to me, and exclaimed in German: 'There you see the famous Napoleonic police!'

The Emperor dismissed Pietri, with instructions to make another report to him in the box after the lapse of an hour, which was done. When the Minister of Police thus appeared for the second time, he uttered the following words, which I remember exactly, and which I have all the more reason for having treasured in my memory, as they appeared so little in harmony with what was afterwards officially reported: *Nous avons fait des arrestations, mais nous ne sommes pas plus avancés qu' auparavant*. Hereupon the Emperor: *Pas de noms? Pietri: Non!*

In the interval, a number of other marshals, and gradually

too, the members of the Imperial Family, made their appearance in the box. Marshal Canrobert wept like a child. A scene of passionate excitement occurred, when Princess Matilda arrived, who had lost all control over herself. Quite late in the evening, Prince Napoleon also put in an appearance. When he approached their Majesties, the Empress turned her back upon him, whilst the Emperor said to him coldly, before the Prince had time to make any fine phrases: '*C'est bien, c'est bien!*' He left the box, without the Emperor having given him his hand, as he had done to everybody else who had come. The Prince is said to have come from a banquet, at which many members of the opposition were present. Thus the evening passed, in an almost uninterrupted series of excitements.

The performance had long been at an end, when report was made, that the streets from the Opera to the Tuileries were lined by troops. The Imperial Family had been compelled, not only to be present throughout the whole performance, but to hold out in the box, long after it had closed. When we left the theatre, the city had become quite tranquil. Only the traces of blood at the Rue Pelletier still bore testimony to the horrible occurrence. Among my more intimate acquaintances, with whom I still discussed the remarkable circumstances of the attempt that same night, was General Roguet, who had escaped with a slight wound on the neck. He assured me that, owing to my much greater stature, I should have been a dead man without fail, had I been seated in the carriage with their Majesties, in accordance with the Emperor's offer, because the bullets and the fragments of the bombs had all passed over the heads of the occupants towards the ceiling of the carriage.

My observations on that fatal evening fully agreed with those of General Roguet, also in this respect, that it remained inexplicable to us both, from where the bombs could have really been thrown. As to the reports that were made to the Emperor in his box, with regard to the origin of the attempt, they were utterly obscure and unintelligible, when compared with the police reports which immediately appeared on the morning of the 15th. The official account had at once received a fabulous colouring, which clearly showed the intention of

letting it appear, as if France and her parties had had no share whatsoever in the event.

I must point out once more, that, throughout the whole evening, during which the Emperor had not for one instant conversed apart with anybody, no report had mentioned the name of any individual as being suspected of the authorship of the attempt.

Over many circumstances a deep veil seemed to be spread. It was characteristic of this fact, that, during a visit which I paid in Paris a few weeks later, and on which occasion I again paid my respects to the Imperial Family, not the slightest mention was made of the matter, a circumstance which was all the more surprising, as I had left for London immediately after the attempt, and had not seen the Emperor again, since he left the opera. Nor did he, in later years, ever say a word to me on the subject, so that I always had the feeling, as if it were unpleasant to him to recall to my memory an event, which had been communicated and explained to the world with the strangest inaccuracies.

To the curious and sad consequences of this attempt belonged, as everybody knows, the deep excitement against England, and the immediate danger of a complete rupture of the alliance of the Western Powers. But the most striking part of the matter was, that this agitation of the public mind in France against England immediately took the most incredible shapes, on the very first day after the event. On the 17th of January, Prince Chimay wrote to me: *Hier le maréchal Baraguay d'Hillier, qui n'a qu'un bras, s'écriait au club qu'il serait heureux de perdre l'autre en combattant un pays qui couvrirait de son pavillon de semblables monstres.*

The Imperial Cabinet itself hesitated a good deal at first, as to what attitude it ought to assume, in face of the various feelings of the country with regard to England :

Le gouvernement impérial a évidemment cédé depuis cet horrible crime à deux courants différents. Dans le premier moment on semblait vouloir amoindrir toutes choses, et le *Moniteur* s'est montré d'un laconisme presque inconvenant. Quelques heures plus tard au

contraire, soit à cause du nombre des victimes, soit écho du sentiment public violemment surexcité, l'attitude a totalement changé. Déjà ce matin on parlait de rupture, même d'hostilités avec l'Angleterre : la coupe était pleine, il fallait qu'elle débordât.

Against Belgium, too, complaints were raised. It was pretended that the conspirators had been residing in Brussels. *Ne négligez aucune précaution*, Prince Chimay warned King Leopold, on the 17th of January, *tout va vite dans ce pays. . . . Je ne puis assez insister sur l'extrême gravité politique de l'horrible incident qui vient prendre une si funeste place dans les causes déjà très nombreuses d'ébranlement Européen.*

In its outer relations, the French Cabinet at first confined itself to approaching England with distinct demands. In the interior, measures of safety were adopted, which were not quite in harmony with the calmness and assurance displayed by the Emperor and the Empress. General Espinasse assumed the Ministry of Home Affairs, and arrests and proscriptions became the order of the day. The Emperor decided to follow the advice of his surroundings, and no longer to leave the Tuileries at night-time during the winter.

In reference to the recognitions which the Emperor granted to the police officials who were on duty on the 14th of January, intimation was conveyed to me of the desire that I should bestow a decoration on one or two officials who were already in possession of the *Légion d'Honneur*. Three severely wounded functionaries out of the Emperor's retinue were pointed out to me, whose services I gladly thus acknowledged. With regard to a fourth member of the police, who was likewise urgently recommended to me for decoration, I will not omit to mention, that the services rendered by him on that evening, were brought into immediate connection with my own person.

According to the account of the matter given by the police, it would seem to have been no less a person than Orsini's associate Pierri, who, when my carriage drove up to the theatre, exclaimed, that I was not the Emperor, but the Duke

of Coburg. This, it appears, had excited the attention of the afore-mentioned police official, a certain Hebert, who then arrested Pierri, just as he was evidently warning his helpmates not to throw their bombs by mistake against my carriage. According to this account, I really owed my life to Pierri. However, it was impossible that Hebert himself could have ascertained the name of the man he arrested, as that zealous police official had remained on the spot, until the arrival of the Emperor, and was certainly present at the moment when the bombs were actually thrown. He had received no less than seventeen wounds.*

It is only too plausible, that, in face of the unheard of confusion which had reigned, an objective determination of all the particulars would have been scarcely possible after the event, even if the investigation had been a more careful one. Neither Orsini, nor Pierri, had any interest in judicially clearing up the facts of the case in every detail; hence I confess that, after reading everything that was published concerning their trial, it never seemed to me to be possible to gain an uncontradictory picture of this most awful event, which had, after all, taken place before my own eyes.

When Orsini's condemnation and execution took place on the 13th of March, the scenery in Paris had already undergone a complete change. The attempt had been stamped as a purely Italian enterprise, for which neither England nor Belgium, and least of all the French themselves, were said to blame. The attitude of a martyr for the liberation of Italy, which Orsini was permitted to assume, gave political imagination a telling material to busy itself with. Jules Favre made it his task to defend, not the life, but the honour, of the accused, and the *Moniteur* itself assisted the great advocate, by publishing Orsini's famous letters to the Emperor Napoleon.

* Prince Chimay, after informing me that three of the officials had been decorated in the presence of the Minister of Police, Pietri, went on to say: 'Le quatrième décoré, Hebert, celui qui a arrêté Pierri, à côté de la voiture de Votre Altesse et l'a sans doute sauvée, en disant, dans le groupe, où se trouvait le misérable prêt à lancer la bombe, que ce n'était pas la voiture de l'Empereur, est encore alité à la suite de ses dix-sept blessures. Je me suis fait conduire chez lui, et je ne puis dire à V. A. tout ce que j'ai reçu de remerciements et de bénédictions pour Elle.'

If a communication of Kossuth is to be believed, it was no less a person than the Chief of the Police, Pietri, who attributed to himself the merit of having caused Orsini, when in prison, to compose his remarkable letter of the 11th of February. On the other hand, considerable doubts have been raised against the genuineness of Orsini's second letter of the 11th of March, and its publication, after Orsini's execution, has been traced back, by many not uninitiated persons, to an agreement between Napoleon and Cavour. Pierri, as is well-known, died on the scaffold, together with Orsini, whilst the sentence of the two criminals, who were said to have thrown the bombs, Rudio and Gomez, was commuted to transportation for life.

Before the drama of this attempt on the Emperor's life had yet reached its close, the draconic laws of Espinasse had been accepted by the legislative body and the Senate, and the so-called security in the interior guaranteed by the discretionary powers granted to the prefects in matters relating to political agitations.

Before long, the arbitrary rule of the police during the epoch of Espinasse's administration numbered 2000 victims. A few vain attempts had been made to prevail on the Emperor to alter his form of government in favour of constitutional arrangements. But, as he was unable to detach himself from the idea that it was impossible to find a man in France, to whom he could safely entrust a constitutional ministerial power, there was no other means of saving Bonapartism, than by foreign enterprises.

Threatening Europe with war, now became an expedient of Imperial policy, to remove, or make people forget, the difficulties in the interior. No one doubted Napoleon's firm determination to solve the Italian question by dint of arms.

Seeing that the Emperor, in order to realise these ideas of his, was advancing more and more towards the Russian Power, and withdrawing from his old ally, I confess that this feature of the time, menacing Europe as it did, was enough to startle every thinking German. Upon Prince Chimay's faithful descriptions of the state of France, I answered without reserve, that I looked upon a system of

despotism, combined with a Russian alliance, as calculated to make the greater part of Germany a willing ally of Austria against Bonapartism. France, I said, had never had a more advantageous ally than England, and would never find in Russia anything else but a rival who was biding his time.

Remarks of this kind had already passed between me and Chimay, at a time when nobody yet believed in agreements, such as afterwards came about between Napoleon and Cavour in Plombières. For the present, all attention was exclusively directed to the diplomatic dispute between France and England, in which the weak attitude of Lord Palmerston was leading to a crisis in the Ministry, which broke out in the parliamentary debates with a violence, such as had not been experienced for a long time.

On the 19th of February, a vote of censure against the Ministry, for its correspondence with the French Government on the subject of England's right of asylum, was moved by Milner Gibson in the House of Commons, and carried by a majority. Lord Palmerston at once resigned office. Aberdeen's second Ministry, with Malmesbury as Secretary of Foreign Affairs, entered into activity on the 1st of March. After the lapse of a fortnight, Lord Malmesbury submitted a correspondence with the French Government, which, as he affirmed, settled the difference honourably, and in a manner satisfactory to both parties.

Although the subsequent acquittal of Bernard, who had been tried before an English tribunal, once more roused the resentment of Bonapartistic France, everything possible had been done, both on the part of the Emperor and the English Ministers, to check the national ill-will. The Queen of England and Prince Albert were in a position to return the visit which the Imperial Family had paid them the year before in Osborne.

Under the existing circumstances, it was quite conceivable that the Emperor should set great value on a fresh meeting with the English Royal Family, and the English Ministers likewise warmly advocated the Queen's visit to Cherbourg, where the French were busied with the most extensive pre-

parations, as though there were a question of invading England.

Owing to all the differences which had so long existed between the two Cabinets, my brother had a very sore feeling against Napoleon, and it was to be feared that the old antipathy would awaken again, which, for so many years, had prevented a friendly approach between the two Courts. Although there were moments, when my brother was so full of his personal relations to the Emperor, that his letters, and especially those he addressed to King Leopold, Stockmar, and others, sometimes appeared to bear testimony to a certain enthusiasm for the ruler of France, nevertheless, since the end of the Crimean war, and notably since the beginning of the year 1858, he always manifested great distrust of Napoleon. Directly after the first diplomatic skirmishes between the two Governments, my brother wrote to me, on my return home from my journey to Paris and London :

‘Our meeting again so frequently, though only for so short a time, has once more proved highly desirable and useful. Two people need only sit in two different rooms, and confine themselves to conversing by letter, and they will immediately misunderstand one another—*vide* Government departments. Your statement of the results of your observations in Paris was very valuable to me, and exactly confirms what we have heard. Walewski’s nonsense, and the Emperor’s imprudence, have now ended by demolishing our Ministry, disgusting all his old friends, and exciting the nation here to the highest pitch. They are said to be rather alarmed in Paris at the result of their own grenades.

‘The nation here would just now run the risk of war, and the greatest tact will be necessary on Lord Derby’s part, to get us out of a position, into which he himself has done his utmost to bring us.

‘At the present moment, as you can imagine, we are quite overwhelmed with business. The complete collapse, and the necessary complete reconstruction, of the Government and Royal household machine, with reference to which, of course, all possible personal interests, wishes, intrigues, etc. etc. come

into full play, are giving us a fearful deal of trouble, and require the greatest attention.

We are so far ready, that the transfer of the seals, offices, and functions, from the old Government to the new one, will take place to-day. On Monday, Lord Derby will make his statement in the Upper House, and then the fortnight's vacation will ensue for the re-election of all those members of the Lower House who have accepted office from the Crown.

‘We mean to take a little rest in Osborne, during this fortnight, of which we stand in great need. The new Ministry, with a minority of 123 votes in the Lower House, and 10 in the Upper House, is now plagued with the Conspiracy Bill, the India Bill, and the promised Reform Bill. We shall urge upon it to proceed with all three, which it will not well be able to avoid, curious as this will appear in people who have been vehemently opposing all three.’

Subsequently, when the relations to France became rather aggravated than improved, my brother gave vent to his angry feelings in a letter of the 22nd of April, the greater part of which referred to family matters, but which contained, besides, the following pertinent remarks:

‘From Paris we hear nothing good. The whole machine has grown unsafe and unsteady. The Chief sees himself attracted towards Italy, where he is about to produce a conflagration, which we must endeavour to prevent, unless all Europe is to be set on fire. The fact is, they are still playing with the most sacred and dangerous things, and are bewailing Orsini.

‘The feeling in Paris against England is on the increase, and the acquittal of Bernard, together with the violent speech of the defending counsel, Mr James, against the Emperor and the Empire, and the indecent ecstasy of the public at the verdict of the Jury, must have given the utmost offence. The Government does not dare now to proceed any further with the trials, because a repetition of the same result is certain, and can only cause further injury.

‘The public here are determined not to act as the bailiff, jailor, or executioner, of a foreign tyrant, and they have the

notion that this part was expected from them, and that they were to be forced by threats to accept it. Here lies the reason for the overthrow of Palmerston, and the falling through of the Refugee Bill* and the trials, and at bottom there is something noble in it all. Only that a nation does not reason, it only feels.

‘We like the Duke of Malakoff, our new Ambassador, very much. He is simple, straightforward, and friendly, quite unused to *les usages du monde*, and unhappy in society; still, shrewd enough to make his arrangements. He is very loquacious, and downright in his expressions. He carries on conversation, such as a general in command, that is to say a French one, would carry on with other officers at his dinner-table, mixed with a good deal of *légèreté*. About the measures of his Sovereign, he speaks very frankly, and not at all flatteringly. In person, he is extremely small and stout, but not as stout as had been said. He is slow in his movements, quick with his glittering black eyes, and very sensible of the favour of ladies.’

The Emperor Napoleon, however, who knew, better than most statesmen on the Continent, that the feelings and relations of the Court in England have a very great influence on everything comprised under the head of public opinion, appeared to have been informed by the Duke of Malakoff that my brother subjected all his acts, measures, and intentions, to a very sharp criticism. If Prince Albert was able to remark that the French General did not speak very well of his master, it was probably not difficult for the General to report to Napoleon the same thing of my brother.

This induced the Emperor to redouble his efforts to conceal from the eyes of the world the inner differences which existed between the Royal and Imperial Families. About the beginning of July, therefore, he urgently requested the visit of the Queen and the Prince on the occasion of the great military and naval festivities in Cherbourg, which were to take place in August, in celebration of the opening of the arsenals. The English Ministry decidedly advised them to

* The Conspiracy to Murder Bill is evidently meant.—Ed.

accept the invitation, so my brother, to his secret annoyance, was obliged, though with a considerable modification of the French programme, to let the great State visit be inaugurated.

On the 10th of July, directly after the first invitation from Napoleon had arrived, my brother confessed to me his great displeasure, both with the English Ministry, and with the Emperor's invitation :

‘We have now been here three days,’ he wrote from Osborne, ‘but pursued by business of the most difficult and disagreeable kind, just like in London. A Tory Ministry with radical programmes, which carries through republican measures with a conservative majority against a well-organised liberal opposition, is a matter of infinite difficulty for constitutional monarch.

‘We are urged by the Emperor and these Ministers to go to Cherbourg. As the festivities there contain, in their innermost kernel, a glorification of the naval and military preparations against England, and we are not inclined, either to be harnessed to the triumphal chariot of the French, or to kiss the rod—we shall pay a private visit, and leave again, *before* the festivities.’

Albert's intentions, however, were only partly realised. It is true that the English Royal party arrived in Cherbourg on the 5th of August, whereas the great festivities only commenced on the 6th. But the French newspapers took care to characterise the interview as an eminently political one.

Nothing was wanting in outward courtesies, which could let the old relations appear entirely unclouded. But, in respect of actual affairs, nothing essential was discussed. Even the most notorious facts, such as the present state of the question of the Danubian Principalities, and a great many other things, were only touched upon quite superficially. Not one of the previous meetings between Napoleon and my brother was so unprofitable in a political sense. Least of all was there any mention of Italy, whereas the whole world was already whispering about a mysterious reception of Cavour by Napoleon in Plombières, which was said to have taken place in July.

The great host of day-politicians may, for the moment, not have paid sufficient attention to the piece covertly played in the watering-place of the Vosges, or they may have quickly forgotten it. It was no secret to my brother, that something important had occurred there. But it appears that he never received the slightest intimation on the subject from Napoleon, for, when I saw him a few weeks later, he had just as little certain knowledge of the Franco-Sardinian pact as all the rest of the world.

So far as there was any news to be obtained at all, concerning the course of Napoleon's policy in the Italian question, the man from whom I could most surely expect it, was Prince Chimay, who was carefully watching the turn of all affairs in the Tuileries. In April, the Prince's reports enabled me to recognise that the unfriendly relations between the Emperor and his cousin Jerome, which I had observed on the 14th of January, had given way to an understanding, which was hardly to be otherwise explained, than in connection with plans of conquest in Italy. Among the public, the strangest rumours were current, in reference to the Emperor's quarrel with the Prince. Prince Chimay gave King Leopold some particulars on the subject, of which he sent me a copy.

Une longue visite que m'a fait hier le Prince Jérôme, tout à fait remis de sa grave maladie, me permet de rectifier ce qui a pu être rapporté à Votre Majesté sur le prétendu refroidissement survenu entre l'Empereur et son cousin. Ce dernier a conservé de sa maladie de Crimée un ébranlement intestinal, que le moindre refroidissement rend très pénible. Il avait dîné la veille de l'inauguration du boulevard chez l'Empereur ; la température était excessive, et le courant d'air résultant de l'ouverture des fenêtres força le Prince de rentrer malade chez lui. L'Empereur que le Prince Jérôme venait de quitter avant de se rendre chez moi, lui avait lui-même raconté en riant les rumeurs auxquelles l'absence du Prince Napoléon avait donné lieu. Cela n'empêche pas, Sire ! qu'il n'y ait entre les deux cousins des discussions fréquentes et des dissentiments sur la marche des choses et la direction de la politique impériale ; mais rien n'est venu jusqu'ici porter une attaque sérieuse à une entente, peu rassurante au fond pour le parti avancé, dont le Prince semble se constituer le

protecteur. Je ne puis, Sire, entrer dans tous les détails d'une conversation fort longue et très diversifiée, mais je puis dire à Votre Majesté, que je n'ai rien à modifier à tout ce que j'ai eu l'honneur de lui écrire précédemment sur l'extrême tension des liens qui momentanément unissent encore la France et l'Angleterre. . . .

However, the relations once more established between the Emperor and the Prince, were most distinctly expressed by a step which the Emperor took in Turin, at the very moment when the foregoing letter was written. About the middle of April, one of those obscure personages whom the Emperor employed in secret affairs, M. Bixio, had gone to see Cavour, and inform him that the Emperor was determined to attach himself to the policy of the King of Sardinia with all its consequences. The programme of the agreement already contained all the points which were afterwards formally settled in the treaty of Plombières, *i.e.* negotiations with the rest of the Powers, for the purpose of establishing the so-called rights of Italy; war, in case the negotiations should fail; emancipation of the countries, as far as the Adriatic, from the dominion of Austria; cession of the conquered parts to the King of Sardinia, in return for the cession of Nice and Savoy; and lastly, the marriage of Prince Napoleon with Princess Clotilde. The only important condition that was added in Plombières, was the reservation of the Emperor, that he should have the sole and exclusive right of choosing the suitable moment for carrying out the treaty.

The secret of this treaty was very carefully kept, and Austria would, no doubt, have been surprised in still greater measure than was afterwards actually the case, had not the preparations and the agitation in Piedmont been more and more ostentatiously paraded before all the world. In the interior of France itself, there was an incessant fermentation, quite apart from the war-like attitudes of the Emperor. Every moment, rumours of fresh conspiracies and attempts were flying through the air, and people in Paris were always relating the strangest things about the Imperial Court, whether it was residing in Fontainebleau, in Plombières, or in Cherbourg.

Whilst the Emperor was making every effort to put an end to the incessant rumours of threatened attempts on his life, the conviction gained an ever greater hold on the political circles of Europe, that his whole policy was governed by his fear of the daggers and bullets of the revolutionists, and, above all, the Italians. My brother also, as well the Prince Regent of Prussia, inclined to this view; indeed, it was said to be a position of the most pitiable description, that the ruler of France should be forced to consider the most important European questions, perhaps against his better convictions, merely from the point of view of obviating murderous plots against his own person.

Considering all the symptoms of mistrust and aversion, which had arisen against the Emperor Napoleon amongst almost all the Powers, towards the end of the year 1858, it might have been thought that Austria would find it extremely easy to arm herself against the ever-increasing intentions of France.

Never before, had so good an opinion prevailed of the unhappy victim of Napoleon's attack and the enmity of Sardinia. Never before, could the idea of an alliance between Austria, Prussia, and England, have, even for a moment, gained a footing, such as it now did.

My uncle in Brussels was particularly fond of talking of this great alliance between Prussia, Austria, and England; in fact, he thought and declared that Russia, too, in remembrance of better times, would ultimately cling to it. Napoleon himself, who took these rather hopeless ideas of a coalition on the part of my uncle very much amiss, was, all the same, mightily afraid of them, and, in Prussia, the turn taken by affairs in October, had brought a government to the helm, which would assuredly have been favourably disposed towards a national rising.

And yet Austria had no allies! To explain this strange circumstance, particularly with regard to Germany, it would be necessary to enter into a description of the inner conditions and relations of Austria. Ecclesiastical and political reaction had, in these years, reached its highest pitch, and the Austrian

Concordat, whose doubtful blessings were just about to be forced upon other German States by the influence of the Vienna Cabinet, formed an easily conceivable, and insuperable, barrier between the State on the Danube and the thinking politicians of the German nation.

There was no lack of those who honestly endeavoured to point out the right course to the Austrian Government. But all such representations were, in those hard times, made to deaf ears, even when they proceeded from men who, neither in respect of their position, nor their age, could be numbered among German ideologists. Instead of cultivating the powers of Germany, the old polity staggered everywhere, partly from a feeling of paralysing fear, partly from an excessive over-estimation of itself, over into the year 1859, which was to raise French Imperialism to the highest pinnacle of its glory.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON'S WORDS TO THE AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR AT NEW YEAR 1859.—THEIR EFFECT.—LETTER FROM PRINCE CHIMAY TO THE DUKE.—THE DUKE'S ANSWER.—NAPOLEON'S DESIRE TO SEE THE DUKE IN PARIS.—KING LEOPOLD'S LETTER ON THE SUBJECT.—THE WAR UNPOPULAR WITH THE FRENCH NATION.—NAPOLEON DETERMINED.—OPPORTUNITY FOR PRUSSIA.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—THE DUKE'S LETTERS ON THE SITUATION TO THE PRINCE AND KING LEOPOLD.—NAPOLEON BELIEVES THE HOUSE OF COBURG TO BE WORKING AGAINST HIM.—THE DUKE IN BERLIN.—LORD COWLEY'S MISSION TO VIENNA.—PRINCE ALBERT'S POLITICAL LETTER TO THE PRINCESS OF PRUSSIA.—RUSSIA PROPOSES A CONGRESS.—CAVOUR AND NAPOLEON.—THE DUKE TAKES UP HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH COUNT VON BUOL.—THE COUNT'S LETTER.—THE DUKE IN LONDON.—HIS IMPRESSIONS THERE.—PRUSSIA UNWILLING TO TAKE DEFINITE ACTION, UNLESS ENGLAND GUARANTEES THE NEUTRALITY OF THE NORTH SEA AND THE BALTIC.—THE ENGLISH CABINET DECLINES.—THE MEMORANDUM OF THE PRINCESS OF PRUSSIA TO THE ENGLISH COURT.—FEARS OF A UNIVERSAL WAR.—PRINCE HOHENZOLLERN SUMS UP THE SITUATION IN BERLIN.

ON the 1st of January, 1859, the *corps diplomatique* assembled in the Tuileries, as it did every year, to offer the Emperor its customary felicitations. After the official addresses were concluded, the Emperor approached the separate Ambassadors, and said to Baron Huebner, the Austrian Ambassador, something like the following words: 'I regret that our relations to your Government are no longer so good as they were in the past. But I beg you to assure the Emperor Francis Joseph, that my personal feelings are not altered in the least.'

As the words of the Emperor were not at once officially determined, they circulated in manifold readings through the

world, and the New Year's greeting soon received an excessive consequence, which subsequently even alarmed the Emperor himself.

Baron Huebner appears to have received the Emperor's words with signs of the most painful embarrassment, and there was no lack of persons in the *corps diplomatique*, who put the worst construction on them. In the drawing-rooms of Paris, people talked, during the ensuing days, of nothing else but the Imperial words, to which also the Court in Vienna attached a threatening meaning. Whilst Austria pretended to be hurt and surprised, Louis Napoleon endeavoured, by every means, to weaken the effect of his idle phrase. But the world was no longer to be deprived of the belief, that the second Empire had now also entered into the phase of its extemporaneous threats of war against other Powers. Nor were sober politicians inclined to conceal from themselves, that the situation must after all be a very serious one, seeing that the Emperor, as Mérimée forcibly wrote at the time to M. Panuzzi in London, had considered it necessary thus to forewarn the public, on an occasion when it would have been so easy and simple to say nothing.

In point of fact, the Emperor, just at the time when he was universally said to have quite entered into the footsteps of his uncle, really had great apprehensions of a dangerous coalition, which, in his opinion, was beginning to be formed against him.

After Chimay had informed me on the 3rd of January, 1859, of his having found the belief current in leading circles, that a complete understanding had been brought about between Prussia and Austria, with respect to which I also was credited with a doubtful merit in the eyes of the Emperor, he wrote on the 22nd of January, after having spoken with Napoleon himself, the following characteristic despatch, which, owing to its importance, I must subjoin here in full :

Rassuré hier par M. de Meyern sur la bonne arrivée de ma dernière communication je me hâte d'édifier Votre Altesse sur ce que j'ai constaté depuis. Lorsque j'ai vu l'Empereur, il y'a environ dix jours, Sa Majesté m'a dit savoir de Londres, de Berlin, de Vienne

même, que notre Roi n'était pas étranger aux efforts qui se faisaient sur plusieurs points pour reconstituer une unité allemande dans un but hostile. Sa Majesté ajouta que sans ajouter foi à tout ce qui se disait, elle s'en préoccupait cependant, et que je devais comprendre l'impossibilité pour la France d'accepter autour d'Elle rien qui ressembla ou put conduire à une nouvelle coalition. Je n'ai pas besoin de dire à Votre Altesse avec quelle énergie je combattis tout ce qui était personnel à mon auguste maître dans l'esprit de l'Empereur, mais vous savez autant que personne, Monseigneur, la ténacité des idées Impériales. J'ai rencontré dans cette conversation avec plus d'assurance et de netteté les principes énoncés par M. de Montessay, et j'ai tout lieu de croire que les relations de la famille Royale de l'Angleterre, comme les vôtres, Monseigneur, avec Berlin et les autres cours, sont largement exploitées par le zèle des agents Français, dans le sens compromettant qu'ils croient le mieux flatter l'opinion ou les préventions du cabinet des Tuileries. J'ai remis à l'Empereur une lettre du Roi, et j'ai reçu la réponse Impériale que je viens de transmettre à Bruxelles. Cet échange intime de pensées ne peut être que favorable, mais je n'en crois pas moins à l'absolue nécessité d'une excessive réserve en toutes choses de notre part tant que dure la crise actuelle, l'une des plus menaçantes qui depuis 1848 aient pesé sur la politique Européenne.

On ne peut ou on ne veut pas comprendre aux Tuileries, que l'union qu'on redoute et qu'on dit vouloir combattre, est avant tout provoquée et nécessitée par les inquiétudes que les Tuileries répandent elles-mêmes ; quoiqu'il en soit, le fait existe, et moins il est acceptable ici, plus il devient compromettant pour la stabilité de la paix, aussi longtemps qu'on aura l'espérance d'isoler les intérêts allemands, de les neutraliser les uns par les autres, ou de les battre en détail. Je sais, Monseigneur, qu'on cherche à se rassurer, par l'absence d'un prétexte suffisant à une rupture directe entre Vienne et Paris, mais la question n'est pas là, elle est à Turin et à Milan. Sans doute la présence du Comte Buol et de Hubner contribuent à fausser et à aigrir les rapports, mais le véritable danger reside bien plus d'une part dans la position intolérable de Cavour, forcé de sortir d'embarras par un éclat quelconque, et d'autre part dans le principe de la puissance Autrichienne en Italie. Je ne pense pas que personne puisse espérer que Cavour propose de licencier l'armée qu'il ne peut plus payer et d'abandonner la fantasmagorie qu'on appelle l'unité et la patrie Italienne. L'Autriche de son côté, peut-elle désarmer et

s'en rapporter pour la conservation du Milanais à Emanuel et au Comte Borromeo? Je crois toujours, Monseigneur, que rien n'est plus dangereux en politique, comme en beaucoup d'autres choses, que de substituer les hypothèses et des convenances à la réalité.

Je suis autorisé à croire sans doute que la chute de Buol, le rappel de Hubner, une proposition de conférences prolongeraient la situation, et en pareille matière le temps gagné est chose immense pour tout le monde, mais ce n'est pas une conclusion, et il ne faut pas se dissimuler que celle qu'on veut ici, c'est l'expulsion de l'Autriche du Milanais. Y a-t-il au monde un seul Autrichien qui consente à discuter cette question autrement qu'à coups de canon? Evidemment non; et c'est ce qui effraye, Monseigneur, tous les hommes sérieux et de bonne foi qui reconnaissent en même temps l'impossibilité d'un *statu quo* italien ruineux et agaçant pour tout le monde.

Je recommande tout spécialement à Votre Altesse les correspondances du journal *Le Nord*. Elles dépeignent très exactement la situation, depuis 15 jours surtout. L'armée de Lyon est sur le qui vive. Les armements et les préparatifs militaires de tous genres s'exécutent sur une large échelle, et cela explique le découragement et la prostration qu'on remarque ici chez tout le monde officiel, si largement compromis dans les oscillations financières.

Ailleurs, on pourrait espérer une réaction sur la pensée gouvernementale de la part de tous ces intérêts menacés, mais ici, plus les circonstances sont graves, plus on est près de ces grandes et subites résolutions qui étonnent et compromettent l'Europe, plus la pensée directe ici se concentre en elle-même et devient impénétrable même pour ses intimes.

Walewski ignorait encore il y a quinze jours le mariage de Turin.

En résumé, Monseigneur, la situation est des plus graves et mérite toute la sollicitude des hautes intelligences préposées par la Providence à la Sauve-garde des peuples et des intérêts sociaux.

De Votre Altesse

le très humble et fidèle serviteur

PRINCE DE CHIMAY.

I did not delay answering Chimay's interesting letter, as I was persuaded that he would find an opportunity to communicate direct to the Emperor Napoleon the observations which I was in the position to make concerning the state of affairs in Germany. I denied, first of all, the official assertions

of the French Ambassadors, according to which a coalition of the Eastern Powers against France was on the point of being formed, but, at the same time, I frankly expressed my conviction, that, in the contingency of a war between France and Austria, no doubt all friends of peace would unite, and that, what appeared to be feared in France as already existing at the present moment, was more likely to be formed at some future time, as a consequence of the war. ‘*Vous sentez bien,*’ I remarked to Prince Chimay, ‘*qu’ on commence à se fatiguer de se trouver tous les ans vis-à-vis d’un bouleversement général ou d’une guerre destructive qui nous vient exclusivement de la France. . . . C’est à Paris où il faut bien se garder de ne pas expérimenter avec la patience et le sentiment national des peuples étrangers.*’

Much as I was attached to the Emperor—so I went on to say in my elaborate letter—and much as I appreciated his good qualities, I was obliged to warn him very decidedly against the false reports of his agents. Just as the Emperor Nicholas had once been driven to a fatal delusion, through such information on the situation of Europe, so, too, was Louis Napoleon in danger of materially under-estimating the feeling in Germany, in case of an attack upon Austria. I remarked, that, both in Vienna and in Berlin, the French embassies were beset by a number of people who pursued nothing but personal ends, making believe that an understanding between the German Powers was never to be expected.

My hints appeared to the Emperor, who read my letter to Prince Chimay, of sufficient weight for him to entertain the wish to speak with me personally. On the 11th of February, I received a telegraphic invitation from the Emperor to come to Paris. That I did not respond to it, was one of those political sins of omission, which I repented very much later on. But, as matters stood, I thought it desirable to take King Leopold into my confidence, and he answered with the following interesting letter.

‘*Laeken, February 14th, 1859.*

‘MY DEAR ERNEST,—I thank you for having asked me,

before taking any resolution, and have already answered telegraphically with '*Non.*' The matter stands thus: The Emperor Napoleon is for the present, owing to the universal feeling against war, at least momentarily *restrained*. He wants to see you, in order to find out what the feeling in Germany really is, perhaps, too, in order to exercise a tranquillising effect on the Paris public, and to make believe in France, that the disposition in Germany is *very submissive*. He would therefore endeavour to draw advantage from your immediate visit, whilst you, on your side, would *attain nothing*, and run the risk, besides, of having subsequently to declare in all directions, that you had *not said* this or that which was imputed to you.

'My advice, therefore, is to postpone the matter very politely and kindly, for reasons which are easily found. Perhaps in a month or so, we can hope that he will be induced to give up his ideas of war, and a decent attitude on the part of Prussia and Germany may save us from much evil.

'If he sees, and if he can be made to believe, that Germany has no intention of again enjoying the blessings of 1806-7, he will drop the matter. If he imagines the thing to be easy, and thinks Prussia is inclined to see Austria ruined, *he will most assuredly make war*. He is not wrong in believing that a little success would reverse public feeling in France, and he is personally very desirous of commanding a victorious army. Cavour is behaving disgracefully, and is entirely taken up with his own interests. To describe Italy as so unhappy, is well-known to be pure humbug. The Sardinians will attempt a collision, in order to enforce war. It must be made plain to them, that this will lead to nothing. An able Austrian Chief might try and give the Sardinians a good drubbing, before Napoleon could be on the spot, but it is too risky, on account of the consequences. I sum up: (1.) In a month, or thereabouts, your visit to the *Empereur* Napoleon may have a very useful effect, and give you the merit of having beneficially influenced affairs. (2.) When the time comes, it will always be necessary to convince Napoleon, that the Germany of 1806 does *not*

exist any more, but a German nation, which is determined courageously to resist any foreign dominion.

‘The Emperor Napoleon wrote to me himself, a short time ago, that nothing had left so disagreeable an impression in France, as the coalition of the years 1813, 14, 15. *Raison de plus*, as there is no question of any coalition of war, for coming to a sensible understanding on a coalition of peace. I am sending this letter to Berlin. Write me a few words, as to how you are satisfied with Austria’s behaviour, and what is intended and believed in Berlin.

‘Your faithful old uncle,

‘LEOPOLD.’

The allusions of my uncle to the aversion of the French for the war, were only too correct, and were confirmed more and more every day. Though it was almost forgotten, after the result of the actual events, it is nevertheless certain that, in the then preparatory stage of the war, a single energetic word on the part of Prussia and Germany would have sufficed to prevent the fearful war of 1859.

The French in general thought with terror of the consequences of a contest that was to be fought out in their vicinity. They took not the slightest interest in the affairs of Italy. The fluctuations which the money-market had been undergoing, since Huebner’s New Year’s greeting, excited the wealthy classes, and the opposition declared that the Emperor wanted to sacrifice the blood of the French, chiefly from fear of the Italian attempts on his life, of which two fresh ones had again been planned at the end of December.

A person of my acquaintance, who took a high position in financial circles, wrote to me, on the 8th of February, from Paris :

‘The general opinion, in so far as it is allowed to express itself under the existing circumstances, has declared itself energetically against the venture of a war, not only in Paris, but, according to the reports of the prefects and the commanders of the gendarmerie, which are made direct to the Emperor, in the provinces too.’

After a few days, the same authority illustrated this assertion by further particulars, which are still worthy of notice, even at the present day :

‘Since the 8th inst., no important change has taken place in the political situation. The comments on the Speech from the Throne have afforded no means of finding any new motives in it to hope for a peaceful adjustment of the existing differences, and diplomatists are more alarmed than ever. The most effective means of preserving peace would be, according to their opinion, some energetic proceeding on the part of England, coupled with the sending of a strong fleet to the Mediterranean.

‘Of the current *bruits de salon*, one or two are perhaps not without interest, and may throw some light on the position of affairs. The Minister for Home Affairs, M. Delangle, represented to His Majesty that the war was unpopular, which was not admitted on the part of the Emperor. Delangle thereupon proposed that, for the purpose of sounding public opinion, no *ordres d’acclamation* should be given for the *entrée* of the Prince and Princess Napoleon. His Majesty accepted the proposal, and the result was, that the illustrious young couple was received in complete and almost uncourteous silence. The Princess is said to have been no less astonished than distressed at this reception.

‘Meanwhile, the violence of Prince Napoleon sometimes leads to unpleasant scenes in the Council of Ministers. During one discussion, he is said to have called the Minister of Foreign Affairs “*mal appris*.” There is talk now, on many sides, of the resignation of this Minister, who, by his given assurances of a pacific policy, is said to have engaged himself too far in this respect. His resignation would therefore be a bad symptom, for which reason it has probably not been accepted up to the present.

‘The Pope is said to be declaring himself very energetically against any sort of abatement of his temporal power. His Holiness is said to have expressed himself towards an important, though not official, personage, about as follows: “*On veut me spolier, me dépouiller de mon indépendance, me*

priver de Domaine de St Pierre. Et bien ! Je préférerais, plutôt que de consentir, m'éloigner et faire un appel à toute la catholicité."

'On the 8th inst., there was a grand Court ball, which the Emperor did not attend, owing to indisposition. The Empress received the *Corps Diplomatique*, and said to Prince Reuss, first secretary to the Royal Prussian Embassy, and just now *Chargé d'Affaires*: "*Eh bien, Prince, comment avez-vous trouvé le discours de l'Empereur ? J'espère que la Prusse sera avec nous, elle ne pourra qu'y gagner.*"

'The latter remark showed plainly, that a decided position had been taken up in the Tuileries, and that war had been resolved on there, whilst French diplomatists were declaring the reverse to be the case. Prince Chimay, too, who had an interview with the Emperor about this time, wrote to me in the same sense. He summed up the result of his interview in the words: "*Cette attitude expectante de l'Empereur prouve surabondamment, selon moi, ce dont je n'ai jamais douté, le parti pris sur le fond de la question. La discussion, s'il y en a, ne portera que sur l'opportunité et la forme.*"'

Walewski caused assurances to be given at all the European Courts, that nothing was farther from the intention of the Imperial Cabinet, than a one-sided alteration of the treaties. But, at the same time, comprehensive concentrations of troops were noticed in southern France, and it was said that the passes of the Mont Cénis were already being cleared of the snow and made practicable for the passage of the army.

In the meantime, the idea of a Congress gradually sprung up, because it was after all intended to alter the treaties of 1815, and pretend that such was only admissible with the general consent of the Powers. It was taken as a matter of course, however, that the conflicting parties in Italy were thereby not to be prevented from continuing their preparations for war.

In making these proposals, Cavour had taken particular account of the bad financial position of Austria, which was unable to bear a long continuance of armed negotiations, and

would therefore needs be disposed to bring about a speedy determination of the question of war or peace.

Under such circumstances, I had gained the conviction, the moment the complications arose, that an incomparably favourable situation in respect to general German affairs must result again for Prussia, and that the course of things would once more afford her an opportunity to make up for that which Frederick William IV had neglected to do during the Crimean War. I regarded the war, on the whole, as a great misfortune, because, supposing the French proved victorious, it was bound to give Napoleon an overwhelming ascendancy. Even if the Emperor were to renounce the ideas of his youth concerning an extension of the French frontier, still, he was sure of so tremendous a superiority after defeating Austria, that the liberal and national development of Germany would necessarily suffer a severe blow.

Now, I had the firm belief that Austria would not gain the victory, without support on all sides from Prussia and Germany. The moment, therefore, appeared at hand, when the inner national reorganisation might be demanded and expected from the old Empire, as the certain price of such support. At any rate, the gravity of the events that were sure to occur in a conflict between the two, at that time, strongest military monarchies of Europe, rendered it advisable, that Germany should not be timidly slow in taking up a decided attitude. The quicker she was, in throwing her weight into the scales, the more surely would she gain the advantage of an arbitrating Power.

Above all, the question of the reorganisation of the German army, the chief command of the Federal forces, and the management of the war altogether, must not be postponed now for another instant. Prussia would have to take the lead of the movement, as a matter of course, and it was merely a question of time, and of firm will, to employ these circumstances in effecting the political union of Germany.

I did not want Austria to be hurt; but Prussia and Germany might surely offer their assistance for the price of their independent consolidation and reformation. In short, it

was necessary to advert once more, in a plain and decided way, to the programme of the union of 1850, and receive Austria into a further alliance, which would once for all secure her possessions and her position as a Power. I based all my hopes on the energy of the Prince of Prussia, who inclined to these ideas, and who now had it in his hand to speedily carry out the plan he had formerly approved of.

In the midst of these turbulent days, I exchanged frequent letters with my brother, and gave him a faithful account of the situation. This was at the same time an answer to his question, as to how Germany would be able to hold her own, in case of an attack by Napoleon, which Prince Albert then regarded as certain.

‘The times are dark and troublous,’ he wrote to me, on the 10th of February, from Windsor, ‘and friends do well to hold peaceful intercourse with one another, before the storm bursts. The Emperor Napoleon appears bent on producing the storm, and much blood will flow, amongst which a great deal of noble German blood! When, and how, we here are to be drawn into the vortex, I am unable to calculate. But, that we shall not be able to escape it in the long run, this I consider certain! God have mercy on him, who is all of a sudden so frivolously bringing so much misfortune upon the world! If you want the text to the speech of the Emperor, read up pages 244-270 in the first volume of the “Memoirs of Prince Eugene.” Napoleon I there sends word to his son, in the year 1805, of his preparations for the campaign of Austerlitz, and orders touching the language of peace which he is to employ. And later on, too, he always reiterates: *parlez paix, agissez guerre*.’

I answered immediately on receipt of these lines:

BERLIN, *February 15.*

‘The troubles of the time, and the unusual activity called forth by them, have engrossed me for the last few weeks, to the exclusion of everything else. One would like to make oneself double and tenfold. . . .

‘I have quite understood the hints in your letter. They

agree with my views in the fullest sense of the term, as has happily often been the case with us in critical positions. I wished to hear you express hopes of peace, which I myself have long been lacking, and unfortunately only found confirmed, what I should have so much liked to be mistaken in.

‘The Emperor Napoleon is fulfilling to the last point, what he, curiously enough, predicted to me in the year 1854, and what I then vainly endeavoured to make them understand in Vienna and Berlin. The failure of the joint operations against Russia was bound to produce the crisis of 1859. This was already then perfectly clear to me. From a despot constructed as Louis Napoleon is, without a friend, with a bad past behind him, and an obscure misty future before him, that which now will happen, was necessarily to be expected.

‘The situation in Berlin is as follows :

‘They desire to preserve peace. They neither intend to, nor will they, give France any provocation, and they are just as averse to neutrality. However, in face of the imprudent steps of Austria, which, with the assistance of the small and middle States, would like to vote Prussia into the war, they are still uncertain what to do.

‘I enclose a copy of the unfortunate Note which has been issued from Vienna, to all of us, with the exception of Prussia. If Austria could be prevailed upon to negotiate *de bonne foi* with Prussia, and to come to an understanding with her, as to how far she intends to assert her pretensions in the Italian question—(I mean towards us, not France)—a joint action of the two Great Powers would be possible. Austria is stirring up the Press in Germany, and is prematurely putting the fire-brand into the hands of the German Michael ; on the one hand in order to force Prussia indirectly to join company with her ; on the other hand, in order, should they cautiously hesitate in Berlin, to direct public opinion against Prussia.

‘A great number of the German sovereigns are fanatically in favour of the war. The Duke of Nassau has just left us here. He insists, as, unfortunately, so many of the others do, on immediate grand military demonstrations. The situation

for all of us—towards Prussia and Germany—is just as painful as it is critical. We are discussing day and night. But events always proceed again at a quicker pace, and I can assure you that, apart from the sad feeling of seeing ourselves on the eve of a great war, our position at this moment is a desperate one.

‘However, bad as the state of foreign affairs is, I find things looking very much better at home, so far as Prussia is concerned. I found the Ministry stronger than I expected. My friends, and with them the Lower Chamber, sensible and prudent . . .’

At the same time, I wrote to King Leopold:

‘I have found the state of affairs here on the whole satisfactory. The Prince Regent and his Ministers comprehend very well, that France cannot be permitted to destroy the basis of European relations. However, they conceive the European crisis now preparing more from a European, than from a specifically German, point of view. They don’t place themselves absolutely on Austria’s side. . . .’

‘On this basis, so long as, to all appearances, central Italy is in question, the participation of the German Governments, or of the Confederation, as desired by Austria, will be refused as completely inopportune, in spite of the urgings of many German Governments, and, in part too, of the German nation; nor is Austria by any means being encouraged in the maintenance of her preponderance in the central Italian States. She has rather been advised, in case a revolt should break out in one or the other of those countries, not to exercise her right of intervention.

‘Should, therefore, any negotiations take place with regard to Italy, they will not agree with Austria, inasmuch as Prussia will show herself inclined to advocate the building up of a different political order in non-Austrian Italy.

‘This attitude is, besides, rendered necessary by the fact that they do not yet see any decided and diplomatically tangible reason for opposing France. It is thought, too, that the Emperor Napoleon should be deprived of every pretext.

‘Furthermore, I have gained the conviction, that, should

the war once break out in Italy, Prussia will very soon be in motion, and appear at the head of the German Federal States against France. It is perfectly understood, that the weakening of Austria's position as a Power, apart from German affairs, is a weakening of Germany herself, and that France is beginning with Austria, in order to end with Prussia. I am not afraid of a repetition of 1805.

'It would be desirable, that Austria should facilitate and hasten this active assistance. They are proceeding in Vienna in many respects with great clumsiness. Instead of putting themselves on a friendly footing with Prussia, and instead of comprehending that the rest of Germany is a military cipher, unless Prussia places herself at the head, they are following suggestions dictated by petty jealousies, and are endeavouring to stir up the other German Governments, in order ultimately to get Prussia voted into the war.

'It was such an intention that inspired the unfortunate Austrian circular despatch, by which nothing has been attained, except to encourage France. It would be satisfactory if you were to use your influence in Vienna towards causing them, at least in face of such great danger, to give up the high tone which they have accustomed themselves to adopt towards Prussia. Such a tone only keeps the distrust alive here, and strengthens our common enemies.'

My accounts from Berlin were very kindly received by my uncle, and he characterised my views as mild and firm. Still, he probably found little ground in Vienna for his counsels, for, on the 1st of March, he wrote to me in great distress 'They seem to be in a war-like frame of mind in Vienna. Isolated as they are, however, this will lead to no result.'

Meanwhile, the preparations for the christening of the Crown Prince's son in Berlin inspired the foreign members of our family with the wish to assist personally at the ceremony. However, it was significant of the situation, that my uncle, out of consideration for his turbulent neighbour, thought it unsuitable at this moment to visit the Prussian Court. For, whilst he requested me to act as his representative at the christening of the Crown Prince's son, 'whom may Heaven

protect,' he declared a few days later, that he noticed 'that his journey to Berlin at that moment would have caused too great a stir in Paris.'

In fact, Louis Napoleon's agents had entirely imbued his mind with the idea, that my uncle and our whole house were actively engaged in calling forth a coalition against him. Numerous remarks of the Emperor to this effect are to be found in the letters which have been published in the 'Life of the Prince Consort.' By far the most characteristic communication on the subject, however, was what my brother wrote to me personally on the 21st of February. It may not be superfluous, therefore, if, to the many documents which proceeded from his industrious pen at this period, and which have since been made public, I here add his whole letter, remarkable as it is, in more respects than one.

'DEAR ERNEST,—Shortly after my last letter was gone, I received yours of the 8th, with the enclosed memorandum. This letter, which was to come into my hands *safely* (through Becker), was sent to him by post to Paris, together with his other letters, and reached me from there through our Embassy. As it was not your intention to entrust this letter just to the French post, I was somewhat startled. But, as your letter was dated the 8th, and was, in spite of its round-about route, in my hands on the 12th, and as your Memorandum is long, and written in German, I don't think it ran any risk, particularly as Becker's presence in Paris will scarcely have been known.

'I can only say, that I quite agree with the views you propound. But, as you argue from the party standpoint, I don't think that your Memorandum will have produced much impression upon the Regent, who is especially afraid and loath to be made a party man, or a party tool.

'We are very satisfied here with Prussia's attitude in the Italian business. It is firm and moderate, and does not lose sight of Germany's interests. I am glad that the national feeling in Germany goes beyond the line kept to by Prussia, as, if a further advance should be necessary, this will bear a

German, and not a Prussian character, and it is just the German character which inspires Europe with respect, because it is sure to be patriotic and disinterested. Prussia has at once ambitious, interested, and dishonest, motives imputed to her. In spite of the moderation in Berlin, however, they are furious in Paris against Germany, Prussia, and especially the Regent, and are threatening the most bloody revenge.

‘The Emperor is expressing himself vehemently in this sense, and he still insists on seeing coalitions, where the national instinct has spoken, and is still speaking. You, too, are looked upon as having a hand in this cabal; Uncle Leopold in the first, and I in the second, instance. How we two have been conspiring together, is proved by our active (!?) correspondence.

‘Should peace be preserved, Europe will have only Germany and the attitude of England to thank for it. The Emperor says, indeed, that the attitude assumed by Germany makes him anxious that it will in future no longer be possible to maintain any peace at all in Europe, but it may perchance also be just the reverse.

‘However, we here must after all endeavour to bring the Italian dispute back to the field of diplomatic understanding, for the war would assuredly be a terrible misfortune for the world, and Austria does not appear so immaculate and innocent, as to make others wish to shed their blood for her. In Lombardy and Venice, she is at least in her right, though she governs harshly. But the occupation of Central Italy by her and France, now lasting over ten years, and the fearful oppression and demoralisation resulting from it, is surely an abnormal condition, contrary to all national law, and a crass immorality! An occupation surely only takes place for the sake of establishing a new state of order under the protection of foreign arms, and not in stupid indifference as to what will come of it, or how long it may last, and without any plan or purpose that might justify such violent measures.

‘I envy you for having seen Vicky. How did you find her? She was very pleased to see you, and is said to have cried when she heard your voice in the corridor, which you

know how to make audible, and which, they say, so greatly resembles my own, a fact that is probably less noticeable to us, than it is to others. Farewell. A thousand pretty messages to Alexandrine.

‘Your faithful brother,

‘ALBERT.

‘BUCKINGHAM PALACE, *February 21, 1859.*’

A few days after the receipt of this letter, I again hastened to Berlin, in order to be nearer to the great diplomatic operations, which were almost every minute bringing about a change of scenery on the political stage. On the 5th of March, the christening of little Prince William took place, which ceremony (seeing that the English and Belgian relatives, as I have already observed, were, to their great regret, obliged to keep away), I attended as the sole representative of the family of the Hohenzollern infant on the mother's side. I prolonged my stay from the 28th of February to the 14th of March, and witnessed during that time a series of the most important transactions in the field of world-stirring questions of war. At the beginning of March, lively apprehensions had arisen in many quarters, that the Prince Regent might be about to lose the credit again which he had recently gained. My brother was quite in despair, because, amidst the tremendous uproar that filled Europe, Prussia still remained silent, whilst the rest of Germany, without a leader, was employing a language, such as almost warranted men in doubting the political capacity of our nation.

Towards the end of February, the English Government had resolved on sending Lord Cowley on a mediatory mission. Thinking it was merely necessary to build up a bridge for the Emperor Napoleon, in order to dissuade him from his determination on war, the English Cabinet sent its Ambassador, who had just returned full of hopes of peace from Paris, to Vienna. However, he was not to touch Berlin. On Prince Albert devolved the task of explaining to the Prince Regent the grounds for this setting aside of the Prussian Cabinet. Notwithstanding, it was only too natural that they were

greatly put out in Berlin, just at the time I was staying there, in the beginning of March. In consequence of these circumstances, a good many exciting scenes were enacted at Court, and people lived in the continual fear of being deceived by England.

In Martin's 'Life of the Prince Consort' these things are obscurely alluded to. As it still frequently happened in such situations at that period, the Princess of Prussia had been obliged to form the van-guard, in order to obtain through my brother explanations touching the tendencies of the British Government. He informed me of the answer he gave her, and remarked upon it:

'I have just written a long political letter to the Princess, and have therefore no more time to repeat myself. Prussia appears to me to possess, in the presence of the Chambers, every means to explain her attitude to them and to the Emperor of the French, to reply to Austria, to keep Germany on the right track, and to secure to herself the sympathies of Europe. Let her only express herself. There is a parliamentary language which can be very dignified and cautious, and still retain the semblance of the lightest expression of opinion, which the lowest understands, and which neither Austria in Notes, nor Napoleon in the *Moniteur* or in pamphlets, can employ. It is to this kind of language, and to what I would say, that I have taken the liberty to draw attention.'

The letter my brother alludes to, which is quoted by Martin, IV. 396, etc., but not with the correct address, may now, I think, be safely communicated in full.

'Many thanks,' he writes, 'for your confidential letter of the 26th. I have since then explained to my dear cousin the reasons which induced our Government not to let Lord Cowley travel by way of Berlin.

'I understand, and Lord Malmesbury also understands perfectly, the difficulty and awkwardness of Prussia's position. Austria naturally seeks protection from Germany. On Prussia will fall the odium of either having provoked France by threats of war, and brought her down upon Germany, or of having, by her reserve, prevented the patriotic unanimity in Germany against France, which it was hoped would keep France in

check. And still, Prussia must, in my opinion, preserve this expectant attitude, unless she is to expose herself and Europe to great risks. For, the very fact of their being certain in Vienna, that Prussia and Germany would take the blows of France upon themselves, might lead them to show the greatest obstinacy there.

‘But your position is not so bad as it looks, for you have most effective means at your disposal. What are your Chambers there for? Why does not Hohenzollern, or Schleinitz, come forward and declare to Prussia, Germany, and Europe, in a well-considered, but courageous, public speech, “that Prussia is ready to fulfil her Federal duties; ready to throw her weight into the scales for the preservation of peace; ready to afford her fraternal protection to Austria, if unjustly attacked; but *not ready* to provoke France, without the most cogent reasons and the clearest right; to bring war upon Germany; to forbid Austria, while insisting on help from Germany, to resist just claims in Italy; that she is intent on raising the defensive power of Germany; compelled to remind Austria that Germany owes no *duties* to Austria in respect of Italy, but that Austria owes Federal duties to Germany; that Austria’s army corps must be ready to proceed to the Rhine, before there can be any question of a declaration of war on the part of Germany against France; that all rights have their corresponding duties, and all duties their corresponding rights; that help in Italy would be an act of pure friendship and generosity on the part of Germany, in return for which Austria, too, must concede to Germany an influence on her Italian policy, as Germany could not pledge her possible existence, leaving Austria free to dispose of such pledge; that, where an equal right of decision does not exist for both parties, there is also no possibility of any solidarity.” The treaties of 1815 recognised such solidarity as lawfully existing in respect of Germany, but not in respect of Italy. Prussia, it should therefore be said, stands in the European question in closer fraternal kinship to Austria, and is also geographically and historically more concerned in it, but in all other respects she is in a position not unlike that of England,

on whose free attitude and efforts in favour of peace praise ought to be bestowed.

‘Thus Prussia, whatever she might be compelled to do, would secure for herself the support of the rest of Europe, and *could* not incur any enmity in Germany, whilst she would acquire the right to adopt precautionary measures against France, in case of war. By the importance which is attached in Paris to a speech by Lord Palmerston, Derby, or Lord John Russell, I am able to recognise the weight which such a parliamentary declaration must carry, for it speaks, not only to the Cabinets, but to every thinking individual in every nation. If it can be assumed, therefore, that such speeches have contributed towards preserving peace, we are justified in expecting the same effect from similar utterances in Prussia.

‘I have no news to give from here. We hope the best from the promised evacuation of the States of the Church, which substantially proves a *commun accord* between France and Austria, would strengthen public opinion in demanding the maintenance of peace as the main object in view, and considerably diminish Sardinia’s means of bringing about the war, etc.

‘ALBERT.

‘BUCKINGHAM PALACE, *March 2, 1859.*’

Meanwhile, programmes similar to those suggested by my brother for promulgation in the Chambers, had already been discussed in many ways at the frequent meetings which I had both with the Ministers, and with the Prince Regent himself. A ministerial communication in both houses of the Diet appeared to the Prince Regent for a time not altogether superfluous. He was undecided, however, as to what could be said, and how it could be said. The proposals made by my brother appeared totally incompatible with the right of interference in Foreign Affairs vested in the Chambers in Prussia. I suggested a more moderate explanation, in which the ultimate aims of Prussian policy should be briefly indicated, merely by way of soothing the public mind. Everything that could

resemble a criticism of the attitude of the other Powers, was carefully avoided. The need of peace, and the steps which Prussia had taken for the maintenance of a good understanding between the Powers were to be explained.

Finally, everything was dropped. 'Subjoined I beg respectfully to hand you the Prince Consort's letter,' Prince von Hohenzollern wrote to me on the 8th of March: 'The lack of harmony with our views here does not lie in the *contents* of the counsel given, but in the inopportuneness of such explanations to the representatives of the country. With the prevailing spirit in Germany, no matter whether artificially produced, or considered as the result of real feelings and sentiments, every single word of such an explanation would contain a weapon against ourselves, and we should be playing an open game with Austria, who, in face of such declarations, *would be sure* to win the match.'

Since the 10th of March, the rumour was current in Paris, that the Emperor of the French had arrived at a complete understanding with Russia, and the war-like disposition there was daily augmented by the hopes of a Franco-Russian alliance. The *Moniteur* brought articles of a more and more threatening character against Germany.

According to reports from other quarters, the preparations for war were being continued in Sardinia and in the south of France, and thousands of workmen were keeping open the passage over the Mont Cenis.

Russia's share in the matter, however, resulted for the present merely in the proposal, well-meant for France, of a Congress of the five Powers.

From the fresh accounts I was always receiving from Paris, I had meanwhile gained the conviction, that the idea of the Congress was also merely intended as a stage in Napoleon's preparations for war, and that the whole matter was arranged out of kindness on Russia's part, in order to give France time for her preparations, and to exhaust the financial resources of Austria, before the war broke out.

The strange antics which Cavour and Victor Immanuel played, in order to create the appearance as if they held Louis

Napoleon by magic power in their clutches, and as if they were free to let loose the revolution at any moment, were in great part also merely a concerted game, in order to exonerate the Emperor of the French from all responsibility in the eyes of his subjects. Louis Napoleon, so I was informed at the time, regarded Cavour's diplomatic attitudes with unconcealed mirth, and never spoke of him in his familiar circle otherwise than as the *Jupiter tonnant transalpin*.

I know that the extensive literature which has accumulated on the life of Cavour, always manages to represent even the smallest details of his actions in the light of a kind of heroic epopee. In particular, Cavour's intentions of retiring, together with Victor Immanuel's plans of abdication, were taken much more seriously by those who were outside affairs, than by people in the Tuileries. But I have good reason to believe that, at the end of March, the most perfect understanding prevailed between Turin and Paris. Chimay wrote to me among other things :

Cavour, qui a eu le mauvais goût de ne pas mettre même une carte chez Huebner, part très content de la famille Impériale, et très froissé de l'accueil des Ministres. Le thème des Tuileries est de le représenter comme très modéré et de rejeter toutes les difficultés sur l'Autriche. L'Empereur a dit à plusieurs personnes que le Congrès ne pouvait aboutir qu'à la guerre ou à une éclatante satisfaction pour sa politique.

The Emperor had then got the idea, that it would be possible to localise the war. The great word with which he afterwards actually kept the Powers in check, was already found, *que la guerre sera localisée et ne peut en conséquence engager toute la confédération*.

At the same time, another acquaintance of mine, who had just come from Paris, also confirmed the fact that the Emperor thought he could resolutely adhere to the idea of war, and localise the conflict in Italy. He had still the same secret fear of German national feeling, and of any sort of quarrel with the whole of Germany, that I had already noticed in him five

years ago. But he relied implicitly upon Prussia's and England's neutrality.

There was a time, when he purposely separated himself from everything which his Ministry caused to be said or written. It may be asserted that, since the middle of March, all the utterances of the French Cabinet—Notes, articles, explanations, and newspaper accounts, were throughout far removed from the real plans of the autocrat, who rather felt that he was perfectly screened and covered by them.

Under these circumstances, I thought it opportune to renew my former relations to the Austrian Minister von Buol, and turn them to advantage, in order, on the one hand, to caution the Viennese Government against trusting to a false feeling of security, and, on the other hand, to pave the way for an understanding between Austria and Prussia.

In my letter to Buol, I particularly vindicated Prussia's attitude, by saying that it would evidently not be her duty to provoke her nearest and most powerful neighbour, but that the matter would be different, the moment the question arose of establishing an alliance against the aggressive tendencies of France.

Count Buol's reply to my letter was delayed somewhat longer than I had expected. It showed, however, that an irritability against all the world had taken hold of men's minds in Vienna.

'The policy of the Emperor Napoleon,' he wrote, 'appears to Your Highness to be capable of a double construction. I must confess that we have regarded it, since the peace of Paris, in a melancholy, but not in a doubtful, light. Of the two methods of explaining it, which Your Highness sets up, neither agrees with our own. We have not started *a priori* from the assumption that Napoleon desired the war under certain circumstances, and we were just as little able to persuade ourselves that the sole object he had in view, was, by an idyllic humanitarian amelioration of the condition of Italy, merely to settle with certain impressions dating from his past. We kept to the fact, that France has a Chief who requires the glory of a commanding position towards foreign Powers, in

order to maintain his rule in the interior, and who is bent on breaking through the bounds of the treaties of 1815.

‘This end he would *undoubtedly* prefer to gain by peace, rather than by war, that is to say, by cowing and isolating Austria, and taking advantage of the pliancy of other Powers. If he now believes he *must* choose the war, lest he should endanger his existence by a retreat, Europe will not be exonerated from blame, for not having resorted to the only effective means of peace, that of openly, consistently, and jointly, standing up for the lawful order of things, instead of vainly spending her efforts in idle attempts at mediation.

My Imperial master has proved that he considers the peace of Europe worth a sacrifice. But to unseemly pretensions Austria will not submit, nor will she let herself be forced out of Italy by the monstrous alliance of Napoleonism with the revolution. A fresh—and the last possible—proof of our love of peace has been given by our acceptance of the proposal of a congress, providing only an honest guarantee be offered, that France does not meditate choosing *her own* time for the contest she is *determined on*. If Piedmont is to remain in arms, and if France continues her preparations, the mask will be thrown off, and I may be permitted to repeat a statement which Your Highness heard in Berlin, and with which you eventually agreed, viz.: that the question for us is not one of finding mediators, but allies.

‘Now, the whole of Germany will be our ally with a cheerful and energetic will, as soon as the Prince Regent shows the plain determination to place himself on our side. I earnestly request Your Highness to rest assured, that the successful union of Germany at this present momentous juncture depends solely upon this determination, and not upon some question or other of form and method. With the one exception, that we are not able to regard Prussia as a Power standing entirely outside Germany, everything has been done, and is still continually being done, on our side, in order to bring about, between ourselves and the Great Power Prussia, an agreement, first from Cabinet to Cabinet, which ultimately the whole of Germany could join.

‘Your Highness will connect your name with an impressive moment in the history of Germany, if you can bring your relations in Berlin, and the authority of your counsel, to bear, in preventing the right opportunity from being lost, to awaken France from her dream of eventually engaging Austria alone in a war.

‘The chief command of the Federal army appears to us to fall so naturally to the Prince of Prussia, the moment he is inclined to assume it, that we do not even believe we can take any credit to ourselves in Berlin, for offering him our vote. Nor could we doubt the general assent of the Confederation.

‘I beg Your Highness graciously to accept the renewed assurance of the perfect respect, etc :

‘Your Highness’s humble and obedient servant,

‘COUNT VON BUOL.’

Much as one might be inclined to look upon the situation of the Austrian Cabinet as a difficult one, there could be just as little doubt, after the perusal of the foregoing letter, that, in leading circles in Vienna, a more intimate approach to the Prince Regent was not thought of, let alone any concessions held in readiness for Prussia in German political affairs. The sole question touched upon by Count Buol, was that of the Chief Command of the army, and even there the terms of his letter showed that Austria at bottom held out nothing but the prospect of the offer of her vote in the German Diet.

The view specially entertained in Berlin, was that the coast of Germany could only be protected against enterprises of the French naval power by the co-operation of England. Although they believed themselves perfectly certain in the Prussian capital, that no sort of danger threatened from Russia, they nevertheless declined to enter into anything without England’s help.

In order to obtain information in this respect, touching the state of things in England, the Prince Regent commissioned me to find out, during my approaching stay in England, whether the strong current prevailing at the Court there

against the Emperor Napoleon had any serious support from the Ministry and from Parliament.

My brother wished me to be present in London at the confirmation of Princess Alice, which took place in Passion-week. I travelled *via* Brussels, where I had several hours' conversation with King Leopold, as quickly as possible to London, where I arrived on the 20th of April, and stayed until the 3rd of May. Simultaneously with my arrival, the news reached London of the fatal ultimatum of the 19th of April, which Austria delivered in Turin through Baron Kellersberg, and which contained the summons to disarm within three days.

This incident brought about a very great change in the feeling and views all over England. If formerly the distrust of Napoleon's tortuous ways and dangerous plans had by far outweighed the antipathy against Austria's arbitrary rule in Italy, the parties in favour of Italy now found courage to speak their mind more openly, and Lord Palmerston no longer hesitated to declare, that there was only *one* remedy on the Continent against Austria's brutalities, and that was the French Emperor.

Upon the whole, I summed up my impressions in London in the following terms: 'There are three kinds of feelings conflicting with one another. Firstly, the general desire for peace, or at least for neutrality; secondly, the pronounced preference shown to Piedmont and Italian liberty; and thirdly, the aversion against France, and the distrust of Louis Napoleon.'

The Queen and the Prince looked more anxiously into the future, than the English public, because they did not share the wide-spread hope that England could remain neutral. However, during the first stages of the war-difficulty, the complete dependence of the Crown on the Ministers and on Parliament in this question became evident to me.

I therefore took every opportunity, in my intercourse with the Ministers, to gain a clear idea as to what support Prussia had to expect from England, in case she should take part in the war. In these endeavours, I was vigorously supported

by the Prussian Ambassador, Count Bernstorff, who, in his official capacity, had been trying long enough in vain to induce Lord Malmesbury to declare himself more distinctly on the subject. I consequently sent word to the latter, to say that I should pay him an official visit, adding expressly, that I was greatly desirous of taking a message on the great question of the day from him to Berlin, whither I shortly intended going.

On the same day on which my conversation with Lord Malmesbury took place, Count Bernstorff informed me of a telegraphic despatch which had just reached him, saying that it had been decided in Berlin to put the whole army on a war-footing, 'not only on account of the dangers threatening from without, but also in order to remain master of the movement in Germany.'

Hence, the occasion was plain enough for the English Government to declare itself in face of these measures. I found England occupied with the most extensive military preparations, and could therefore start my conversation with Lord Malmesbury by asking what these military preparations, which I had been admiring for the last fortnight, signified, if there was no intention of coming to some understanding with Prussia, even on the preliminary questions. I had received special instructions from the Prince Regent to use all my endeavours to persuade the English Government to guarantee the neutrality of the Baltic, as, in the contingency of a war on the Rhine, no corps of observation could be left in the extreme East. I therefore tried to draw the attention of the English Minister to this question of neutrality, above all other things, but I was soon forced to see that such settlements on principle would never be entered into, and that it was at best the intention of the Cabinet to restrain the French fleet from ventures of a wider description.

From all this, the conclusion could be drawn, that England would on no account make up her mind to afford any direct help, or interfere actively between the belligerent Powers, and that the most she would do, was independently to choose her own time for opposing the Emperor of the French.

Besides, it was very uncertain whether the Ministry would be able to maintain itself during the next few weeks, so that, side by side with all these considerations, was the contingency of a new Cabinet, which would support the Italian cause still more directly, and therefore be all the more friendly disposed towards the Emperor Napoleon.

The policy of the English Cabinet thus appeared quite plain to my mind, so that I thought I ought to scruple no longer in recommending the Government in Berlin to build no further hopes on England.

On the 25th of April, the Princess of Prussia sent an excellent memorandum to the English Sovereign, which reached England on the 3rd of May, and certainly improved the already favourable feeling at Court, but would scarcely have altered anything fundamental in the English decisions, even if the Ministry had not soon succumbed to its opponents in Parliament. For, on the 17th of June, as is well-known, Lord Palmerston formed his second and last Ministry, which he carried on until his death in 1865.

This memorial on the situation of Germany and Prussia, which the wife of the Prince Regent forwarded to England, contained a warm appeal to the sentiment of common interests, which existed on a well-established historical basis between Prussia and England with respect to their position towards France. But it lapsed rather too much into the mistake of taking far-reaching contingencies into account. The Princess took so decided a view of the 'instability of the present dynasty in France,' and 'the basis, upon which the treaties altogether might be re-established,' that it was hardly possible to make the memorial a subject for discussion.

As matters stood, a universal war was at that moment believed in, at least all over the Continent. Even my uncle, whom I spoke to in Brussels on my return journey, had during the last fortnight been startled out of his otherwise so characteristic tranquillity by the actual outbreak of the Italian war. Also in Belgium, orders had been issued all on the quiet to make considerable preparations. The mood of the nation itself was oppressed, and full of fear of the French neighbour.

The King was of opinion that it was necessary for Germany to hold herself in complete readiness for war, and to summon up all her resources; although he admitted that, before proceeding to blows, she ought to wait until the French armies had taken actual possession of Austrian States, or at least of Lombardy, which he had not the slightest doubt they would.

As to the situation in Germany, it was so forcibly described by Prince Hohenzollern in a letter which he sent to me in London, that I think I cannot do better than employ his own words:

‘BERLIN, April 30, 1859.

‘The irresistible pressure of the ever-advancing facts makes it scarcely possible to fix any single incident, and to express oneself on the situation and the contingencies which are always changing their shape from one day to the next.

‘Hence, our present policy is no longer a question of war or peace, but a question of whether Prussia, or Austria, is to take the initiative as leader of German affairs.

‘We are endeavouring to determine the latter by every means we can employ. For the purpose of inspiring the German States with confidence—for confidence is the chief thing, in face of the highly strung feeling of Germany—the order has been issued to-day to place the *entire* army on a war-footing. In addition to this, the fortresses are being armed. Thus we are approaching the possibility of war, and are awaiting the further development of events with calm and serious deliberation. Austria will inform the Diet on the 2nd of May, that she has commenced the war in Italy. Whether she intends to combine further proposals with this announcement, on that point we are not yet clear. At any rate, we presume that, evading article 46 of the Act of Confederation, she will interpret and assume article 47 to be in point. If the majority of the Confederation agrees to a discussion of §47, there is no longer any doubt as to the result of the decision, which will be synonymous with a declaration of war against France. Now, it is our duty to restrain our confederates from a too hasty declaration in this direction, and to reserve it to

our judgment to decide when the admissibility of the discussion of §47 sets in.

‘In order plainly to indicate our position, we intend now to effect those preparations for war, which are to prove to Germany that we are capable of making our influence felt, not only with cheap words, but also with deeds.

‘We shall be able to ask this proof of confidence from Germany, because our readiness for war is to show that we can take part at any moment, and with the weight of our whole power, in the defence of the integrity of German Federal territory, and of a confederate who is unlawfully attacked. The right to determine that moment, however, is one which we must reserve to ourselves. It is to be hoped, that Austria will be reasonable and, in spite of her defiant manifesto to the Imperial nations (which, among ourselves, savors somewhat of a hankering after the German Imperial dignity), not want to force her Prussian ally out of Germany, and in this way take up an untenable position of power, which could only result in a schism in the heart of Germany.

‘Austria may, will, and shall, make use of us, but the form and the measure of our assistance cannot be dictated to us, but must be the outcome of our very own decision. Monday will determine the issue for Germany. From England we want neither a sacrifice, nor a precise declaration. We resign claim to both. Only one thing we do hope for, and this concession cannot fail us; that is, the declaration of the neutrality of the North Sea and the Baltic, in so far as these seas wash German coasts. Our Chambers will be closed the end of next week. We are still demanding a credit of 50-70 millions. And now good-bye.

‘In great haste, for the post came a day later, but with sincerest devotion,

‘Yours, etc.

‘A. VON HOHENZOLLERN.’

CHAPTER IX

THE KING OF SARDINIA'S LETTER TO THE EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH.—AUSTRIA COMMENCES THE WAR.—INADEQUACY OF HER FORCES.—THE FRENCH ARMY.—WILLISEN'S MISSION TO VIENNA.—NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN PRUSSIA AND AUSTRIA.—THE BATTLE OF MAGENTA, AND NAPOLEON'S ENTRY INTO MILAN.—EFFECT IN ENGLAND AND PRUSSIA.—LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT.—THE DUKE'S REPORT TO QUEEN VICTORIA.—PRINCE ALBERT ANSWERS.—THE BATTLE OF SOLFERINO.—NAPOLEON'S DESIRE FOR PEACE.—THE TRUCE OF VILLAFRANCA.—AUSTRIA'S DOUBLE-DEALING WITH PRUSSIA.—LETTER FROM THE PRINCE REGENT OF PRUSSIA.—AUSTRIA'S CIRCULAR NOTE TO THE GERMAN GOVERNMENTS.—PRINCE ALBERT ON THE SITUATION.

In the beginning of April, a letter became known, at first only in private Court and diplomatic circles, which the King of Sardinia had addressed to the Emperor Napoleon, and in which it was said :

Si par des considérations de politique intérieure, dont il ne m'appartient pas de me faire juge, le gouvernement de Votre Majesté devait abandonner la cause de l'Italie, cette défection de la France serait mille fois plus sensible pour le Piémont que la perte de la bataille de Novare.

En présence d'une pareille éventualité, que je veux croire impossible, il ne me resterait plus qu' à suivre l'exemple de mon père, le Roi Charles-Albert, et à déposer une couronne que je ne pourrais désormais porter avec honneur pour moi, ni avec sécurité pour mon peuple. Forcé de renoncer au trône de mes Pères, ce que je me dois à moi-même, à la gloire de ma race, à l'intérêt de ma patrie, je me verrais obligé de faire connaître au monde les causes qui m'auront mis dans la nécessité d'accomplir un si douloureux sacrifice !

Prince Chimay communicated this extraordinary letter to my uncle and myself, with the remark, that its partial, though still very limited, publicity was traced to an indiscretion, either on the part of Count Cavour, or of Prince Napoleon. At any rate, the matter itself was of the greatest moment, and if any doubt still existed in the Emperor's mind, as to whether the war was inevitable, his scruples were now gradually being lessened by the inconsiderateness of Sardinian policy. The Emperor used every means in those days, to make those who were urging him on, understand, '*que chaque jour de délai équivalait à une perte pour l'Autriche et à un gain pour la France.*'

The preparations which were actually being made for the war, could be effected all the more quietly and imperceptibly, the longer matters were deferred, and the more time was taken. Besides, France had the immense advantage, that she was able to accomplish her preparations, thanks—as Chimay expressed it—to the admirable wheel-work of her military administration and her full treasury, without employing any extraordinary means at all.

In face of this decisive fact, it appeared to me to be excessively hard on the part of the mediating Powers, that they should so anxiously control Austria in every step she took, and incessantly require her to abstain from everything that might incur the semblance of aggression. There was no doubt that, owing to this circumstance, the position of the Emperor of Austria became absolutely intolerable. Just at the moment when I hastened to England, as related above, the negotiations concerning the Congress had assumed so distressingly tedious a character, that any one who reads all those totally worthless diplomatic despatches, which are recorded with merciless elaboration in historical works, may well lay claim to our pity. As a matter of fact, no one who knew what was going on, then placed the very slightest weight on the documents of Walewski, Cowley, and associates, in reference to this Congress question. But I thought it characteristic of English politicians, that they still inveighed most vehemently against the public disturbers of peace on the

Seine, whilst they were, unintentionally perhaps, but in actual effect, binding their Austrian protégé hand and foot.

That the latter at last disengaged himself, and endeavoured to stand on his own legs, was after all to be foreseen, and, if justly judged, could not be misconstrued. Just those, however, who, for the last three months, had been abusing Louis Napoleon's duplicity and cunning all over Europe, were subsequently the first to declare that Austria had now manifestly put herself in the wrong, as she had begun the war without any pretext, had addressed the ultimatum to Sardinia, and crossed over the Tessin.

The circumstances under which the Austrian Government was led to take this much-blamed and fatal step, are up to the present day still unexplained, and will probably remain so for some time to come. I find a few particulars in my correspondence, which at the time permitted me at least to entertain certain suspicions on the subject, and we shall probably not be very much mistaken, if we look to St Petersburg to find the motives for Austria's sudden and incautious outburst. At any rate, the strangest suggestions had reached Vienna from there, in the days preceeding the ultimatum. They managed, in every way, to make the Emperor of Austria's mind easy as to the intentions and plans of Russia. After all—it was said—there could be no doubt about the identity of the interests of the old dynasties!

Little as such assurances on Russia's part were to be relied upon, their value was none the less greatly over-estimated by certain persons in the Emperor of Austria's suite, who, for the last ten years, had been indefatigable in bearing the Russian train. Count Buol had bitter complaints to make of the interference of the military Cabinet under the superintendence of Count Gruenne, and, according to accounts I received later on from Berlin, he is said to have been as good as dismissed from his post, from the moment that he declared his disapproval of the so-called energetic military measures against Sardinia.

In this way, the decisive step which the Emperor Francis Joseph took in Turin, on the 23rd of April, was also fatal in

this respect, that a unity of will did not exist in the Vienna Government, or in any of its diplomatic and military proceedings. Whilst Austria's diplomatic action was becoming more and more pressing and vehement, her military preparations were delayed, so that the *ultimatum* was actually delivered at a moment, when it must have been known in the Foreign Office, that there were by no means yet sufficient active forces mustered in Italy.

At any rate, led astray by Russia, the party which appears to have brought its influence to bear through Count Gruenne, was carried away by thoughts of vengeance against Sardinia.

Everything possible and impossible had been done in Vienna to extricate themselves from the undoubtedly most painful and unfair situation that can be conceived. Only the one thing which could really help them, a plain, open, and candid understanding with Prussia, and the recognition of the legitimate position of the German Confederation, under the uniform leadership of the sole German Great Power,—this idea appeared to be quite excluded. In glancing back to-day at this distressful period of history since 1848, it might be imagined, that this so simple solution of the problem we are treating of, was actually something quite unknown in leading quarters. Unfortunately, what prevented me especially from entertaining this opinion, was the fact, that I myself had, both verbally and by letter, repeatedly discussed the position of affairs in this sense, and was, therefore, at least certain that ignorance of what the German nation demanded could neither be pleaded in Vienna, nor in Berlin.

The old Empire, which had every reason to be greatly exasperated, now attacked its Italian neighbour without allies, but only to stop short again, after the first hesitating steps, and leave all the threats unexecuted, which it had launched forth with such big words.

One of the most unfortunate struggles of the century began, in which chance seemed more than ever to have possessed itself of the general's baton. In Germany, no slight astonishment was felt, when the true numbers of Austria's disposable forces became known. After the mustering of the

fourth battalions, her Italian army, at the outbreak of the war, was not stronger than 154,000 men, of which 33,000 would have been necessary for the garrisons in Lombardy and Venice, and 11,000 for the occupation of the Romagna. With 112,000 men, who were concentrated on the Tessin, the invasion of the Kingdom of Sardinia had been begun, although the Master of the Ordnance, Count Gyulai, had most positively declared this force to be insufficient to carry through the expedition entrusted to him.

The most inexplicable contradiction in Austria's measures, however, was undoubtedly the fact, that the Archduke Albrecht had offered in Berlin, a few days before the ultimatum, to muster 250,000 men on the Rhine, whereas at that time the number of disposable troops for the Italian campaign alone was, according to the most positive declaration of the General in command there, entirely insufficient.

The Austrian army, by crossing over the Tessin, had raised expectations which led the whole world astray, although it can now be regarded as proved, that the speedy march to Turin, as it was dreamed of in Germany and England, was neither expected, nor could it enter the head, of the Master of the Ordnance.

At head-quarters, the delusion prevailed, that the French would appear in Upper Italy much sooner than was actually the case. For, here too, half-measures and tardiness, imperfect preparations, and dissension among the Generals, had built up impediments of every description, so that it was afterwards easy enough to say, that, up to the 14th of May, when the Emperor Napoleon took up his head-quarters in Alessandria, the Austrians had had ample time left them to knock the Sardinian army on the head.

As a matter of fact, the Master of the Ordnance was so strictly bound to the orders which were sent to him from Vienna, that, day after day, the case occurred at head-quarters, that his own decisions and orders had to be countermanded, owing to instructions received from the Military Chancery.

I was furnished by a friend with such reliable accounts

from Austrian head-quarters, that I was able, at an early date, to foresee the sad course of events.

About the middle of May, the French stood with a force of 150,000 men and 162 guns on Italian soil. Napoleon had quitted Paris on the 10th of May, in order personally to assume the command of his army.

At the beginning of the war, he was in a kind of military excitement, and disposed, quite contrary to his usual custom, to sudden and energetic ventures. With somewhat of the nervousness of a dilettante, he began his preparations for an, if possible, decisive blow. But the execution of the details of his plans fatigued him; he grew undecided, and at last delayed the attack as long as possible. Whilst he used at first to encourage his Generals: *'Il nous faut arriver avec la rapidité de la foudre,'* the anxiety with regard to the provisions and the munition for his army, grew too much for him, after his arrival in Italy, so that he did not dare to undertake anything. *'Si l'on ne fait pas des efforts heroïques,'* he now declared, *'pour créer une réserve de biscuits et de fourage, qu'on ne peut former ici, où les administrations n'aboutissent qu'à peine à faire vivre l'armée au jour le jour, je me trouverai dans des grandes difficultés et je ne pourrai pas me porter en avant dans un pays dévasté par l'ennemi.'*

On a closer personal inspection of the army, when in the field, Napoleon found its equipment altogether very imperfect. He wrote long-winded letters to the War Minister in Paris, in which he made bitter complaints, and added only too correctly: *'Ce n'est pas un reproche que je vous fais. Je ne l'adresse qu'au système général, qui fait qu'en France nous ne sommes jamais prêts pour la guerre.'*

The vain expectation of the attack on the part of the French army was already causing some anxiety in the Austrian camp. The inactivity of the one party could not marvel enough at the inactivity of the other. Thus Gyulai resolved, on the 20th of May, on a great reconnoitring expedition, which was to be carried out in the direction of Alessandria-Novi by General Stadion, with twenty-five batallions from Stradella. The battle of Montebello ensued, the unfavourable issue of

which instantly produced a depressing effect on Austria's friends in Germany. Owing to the taciturnity of the Austrians, people were dependent for their news on the French, who announced unconceivable losses on the part of their adversaries.

A few days afterwards, the battle of Palestro followed, and, towards the end of May, Prince Chimay wrote to me from Paris, characteristically enough of the position of affairs: *Aujourd'hui on parle encore du Mincio; qui sait, si un peu plus tard on ne parlera pas de Venise.*

Under such unfavourable auspices, the news arrived from Vienna, that the Emperor Francis Joseph himself would shortly proceed to the seat of war, in order to inspire his troops with fresh courage, and bring better order into the management of the army. He had General Hess at his side, of whom the greatest expectations were entertained, above all in Germany. Favourable as, under these circumstances, the effect of the Emperor's impending departure for Italy was, it was just as deplorable that, owing to his absence, the political and diplomatic action was now sure to come to a sort of close, to be followed, as far as could be foreseen, by a fresh stand-still in the preparations and proceedings of Prussia and Germany.

Willisen's mission to Vienna was undoubtedly the most important step that could be taken, and news from Vienna was therefore listened for with the most anxious attention. It was very difficult, however, to ascertain anything certain and reliable concerning Willisen's settlements. I was consequently compelled to send a trusted friend to Berlin, to whom the Prince of Hohenzollern, upon guarantee of the strictest secrecy, explained the position of affairs.

Before the Emperor of Austria's departure to Italy, Willisen had received the assurance from him, that he still maintained his hopes of a firm alliance, and would, therefore, for the next three weeks, take no kind of independent step in the Diet. Hence, it could be assumed that, within a very short time, these agreements and preliminaries were sure to lead to a firm treaty. Mysteriously enough, however, these negotia-

tions, too, died a natural death, and, as scarcely anything certain ever became known about them, a report which reached me at the time, may not be unwelcome :

‘Your Highness will be glad to hear that matters are after all not so bad as they have been represented. I therefore hasten to give you a short, but quite authentic, preliminary account of the result of Willisen’s mission.

‘It is true that Willisen had no authority to make any binding concessions. But the result of his interviews with the Emperor and with Rechberg has been embodied in a *résumé* drawn up by Rechberg, which is now ready for consideration here.

‘In brief outlines, this *résumé* contains the following points. 1. Austria leaves it to Prussia’s discretion to fix the moment *when*, and the way *how*, she will take an active part in the war. 2. She leaves the leadership of the Federal army to Prussia. 3. In return, she demands from Prussia the guarantee of her territorial possessions in Italy.

‘I am told that the Prince Regent and the Prince of Hohenzollern are in favour of the simple acceptance of this programme of future German policy, and that its opponents, not daring to propose its simple rejection, are advocating its acceptance on conditions which it is expected Austria will not consent to.

‘This is principally the aim of Pourtales, who is said to be demanding, among other things, that Austria shall recall her Ambassadors from the German Courts.

‘I add, by way of a supplement, that Austria is willing, in return for Prussia’s support in this war on the given conditions, to resign to her, not only the military, but also the *political*, leadership of Germany, and furthermore, that the guarantee of Lombardy, or rather of Austria’s Italian possessions, is understood to be given, not as a permanent thing, but as only lasting for the present period. The latter fact is of importance.

‘This guarantee, however, was offered by Willisen from the beginning. But Austria always made further demands,

until at last the Emperor, before his departure to Italy, sent for Willisen, and left the matter as it now stands.

‘The Prince tells me, that a Council was held yesterday, and that, although no definite resolution was arrived at, he has no doubt that the decision will result *simply* in favour of accepting the *résumé*. The Prince Regent is decidedly for it, and, besides the Prince (of Hohenzollern), also Auerswald. To-day there is to be another Council. The Prince requests that, *before* the matter is settled, Your Highness will be kind enough to keep the substance of Willisen’s arrangements very secret. He says that he is looking forward to the moment when the bomb will explode. But that at present no one has an inkling of it, as the Austrians have also said nothing of the matter.’

Meanwhile, the anticipated announcement of a definite acceptance of the arrangements between Prussia and Austria did not arrive. In the first instance, they were loath in Berlin to declare themselves publicly, because they feared it might interfere with the underwriting of the loan that was being brought out. Afterwards, again, the situation was altered every day by the rapid course of events at the seat of war, so that the military portion of Willisen’s arrangements in Vienna fell to the ground, as it were, of their own accord. Austria required all her active forces in Italy. The war on the Rhine would presumably fall entirely to Prussia’s lot, if it once came to action.

For, whilst they were discussing, meditating, and calculating, in Berlin, the battle of Magenta had been fought in Italy. I will not enter into a description of the military details of this desperate event. It is sufficiently well-known, what fortunate success attended the covered march of the French along the upper Ticino, and how the unsuspecting Master of the Ordnance, in the everlasting expectation of a battle on the Po, was startled, on the 4th of June, by hearing the fatal thunder of the cannon at Turbigo and Buffalora. The result of the struggle, which was now concentrated round about Magenta, became characteristic of both parties, owing to the fact that two days after the battle, total uncertainty

regarding the situation still reigned in the hostile camps, and neither party really had the courage to attribute the victory to itself.

The effect of this circumstance was, that Germany had no positive news of the fatal results of the battle, so far as Austria was concerned, until quite late. In Dresden, where they were in possession of numerous good sources of information on the events of the war, the opinion still prevailed on the 8th of June, that the battles on the Ticino were continuing without interruption, and it was only on the 9th of June, that exact information reached them of the hasty and fatal retreat of the Austrians to the Mincio.

Napoleon's entry into Milan, and the tremendous effect caused by this event in Paris, now made it appear much more difficult for the Government in Berlin to ratify Willisen's much-discussed arrangements. Each day that rendered Austria less able to maintain the struggle, increased, not only the danger of transferring the war to German soil, but also the disinclination to do so.

Disappointment set in everywhere among the friends of Austria. Thus it was reported to me from Dresden: 'The lost battle of Magenta, and Napoleon's entry into Milan, have produced a very depressing effect here. Many a French-hater will now see what a formidable enemy has been brought down upon us by Austria's imprudent behaviour, imprudent, because this Power has hitherto shown that she possesses neither the means, nor the capacity, to resist her opponent. Germany, therefore, has good cause to consider well, before she enters into a contest, the issue of which nobody doubts.'

In England, too, there was no staying the Napoleonic current. It was tragic to see how all the hatred of Napoleon, which had but recently been so vehemently proclaimed, grew silent in face of the accomplished facts, and how the consideration which had just been shown for the treaties in favour of Austria, suddenly changed to the pure reverse.

Immediately after receiving the first news of the course of events at the seat of war, my brother wrote to me on the 3rd of June, before Magenta:

‘Yesterday evening, I received your telegram in ciphers. I knew that matters stood something like what you describe. In spite of all their arrogance and insolence, the Austrians have now, after all, let themselves be beaten on every occasion, whether great or small. They have already lost 10 guns and 4000 dead and wounded, a great deal of ground, and their lines of communication between their centre and Milan, and have surrendered the Lakes and the Alps to Garibaldi! The desire for neutrality now predominates here entirely. Palmerston hopes soon to see the Austrians turned out of the whole of Italy; *he himself* is trusting to the Address to overthrow the Ministry. Since the elections, the Ministers stand 300 against 350. Therefore, if the opposition really means to hold together, they will be in a most decided minority. Until yesterday, the opposition was disunited. But yesterday, Lord John and Mr Bright are said to have concluded their pact, and Lord John and Palmerston had already come to an understanding before.

‘The *Allgemeine Zeitung*, by a stupid article, in which it insinuates that the Germans should march on Paris, because the French are unprepared, has produced a bad feeling here, and has caused even the *Times* to publish a very anti-German article! The great conspiracy *pour localiser la guerre* is gaining ground daily, owing to the present state of affairs. . .’

Although I knew that Prince Albert’s observations on English affairs were only too exact, and that the tendency indicated must have been further strengthened by subsequent events, I thought I might turn the fact of my having, by chance, received a personal letter from Queen Victoria on the 6th of June, to advantage, by making a direct and detailed report on the situation and its dangers to the Queen herself. In this report, I represented that the time for an understanding with Prussia on a joint attitude was now necessarily at hand, and, in the hope that the Queen would communicate my letter to the Cabinet, I requested that a position should be taken up by England, which would at least render it possible for the German Powers, whilst covered against Russia, at the last moment to parry the threatening preponderance of France.

My brother answered, immediately upon receipt of this report, on the anniversary of Waterloo, in a letter which showed the whole alteration of the situation with undeniable distinctness, one might say, indeed, with letters hewn in stone :

‘Your long letter to Victoria, the argumentation of which is perfectly correct, and its logic irrefragable, nevertheless appears to me not to embrace the *whole* case, and induces me to make the following observations: The English Government is a popular institution, and the constitution is becoming daily more and more democratic. Nations do not *calculate*; as masses, they cannot calculate, they only feel. Hence, they are not led by their interests, and still less by principles of, or deductions from, public or international law, but only by feelings and instincts. To these belong the feeling of justice, the feeling of liberty, and chiefly the instinct of self-preservation. Since 1817, the English nation has been striving for the further development of freedom and self-determination, at home as well as in Europe. Just as long, Austria has been standing at the head of all attacks against the nations, their freedom, and their independence. Since 1830, Democracy has been gaining the day in England, and French democracy is joining her. From that time until the Spanish marriages, Austria has been her pronounced antagonist on the Continent. In the storm of nations from 1848-49, it was Austria’s cruelty in Italy and Hungaria, and her harshness in Germany, which were continually being held up to the English people by Palmerstonian diplomacy, the Press, and the refugees. The Concordat and Jesuitism, coupled with the persecution of the Protestants, filled the cup to the brim. That Sardinia, as the sole constitutional and tolerant State in Italy, in spite of its sad position between Austria, France, and the Pope, has had England’s fullest sympathy, needs no mention.

‘It required the immorality of Napoleon’s and Sardinia’s conspiracy against Austria, to vanquish all these feelings, and make the feeling of justice supervene to outvie them. This had occurred, when you were still here. Thereupon, then, Austria invaded Sardinia, and suddenly violated this feeling of justice, and transferred it to the enemy! Hence, all that

was left, was the instinct of self-preservation. This is still *strong*, and incites to *hatred against France*. The Austrians, however, have now evacuated Lombardy, the States of the Church, Parma, Modena, etc. The Italians are giving vent to their sense of liberty and national feeling, and their acclamations of joy fill the ears of the English nation. What statesman could adopt measures to force Austrian rule again upon delighted free Italy? And sacrifice for this the safety and the peace of his own country?

‘All we can do, therefore, is to maintain the strictest neutrality. New facts are required to awaken new feelings.

‘Ever, etc.,

‘ALBERT.

‘WINDSOR CASTLE, *June 18, 1859.*’

A few days afterwards, Derby's Cabinet was overthrown, and the friends of Italy and of the French Emperor brought England's influence to bear in exactly the direction predicted by my brother. This happened at a moment, when they were beginning to think in Paris and London, that the conclusion of peace was imminent. For, after the unfortunate battles along the line of the Ticino, the leaders of the Austrian army had determined to retreat, and concentrate their forces on the Mincio, where the Franco-Sardinian power was to be shattered against the famous ‘invincible fortress-square.’ The Emperor of Austria had himself assumed the chief command, and the unfortunate Master of the Ordnance resigned his baton. The real management of the operations now fell to Lieutenant-Fieldmarshal Hess. On the 21st of June, after having fought the severe battle of Melegnano on the Adda during their retreat, the Austrian forces were once more united under the protection of their fortifications, and hoped, by a decisive battle, to be able to reconquer Lombardy, and prevent the attack on Venice, which was being prepared by the French fleet.

The allied armies had followed so rapidly in pursuit, that, when on the morning of the 24th of June the battle of Solferino commenced, they hardly had any idea on either side,

how near the main armies were to one another. This bloody battle has been so often and so thoroughly discussed from the military point of view, that it appears to me superfluous to make special mention of the trifling details that were communicated to me from various sides. In the Austrian army, so my cousin Mensdorff wrote to me a few days after the battle, the opinion prevailed, that the retreat ordered by the Emperor would not have been absolutely necessary. My cousin appealed especially to the fact, which was subsequently also pointed out by many other Austrian officers, that 'our right wing had been decidedly victorious, the left wing half and half, and only the centre really defeated.'

'With three weak regiments of cavalry,' Mensdorff went on to say, 'I kept the enemy's whole cavalry, and his numerous artillery, which was drawn up in the centre, in check from eight o'clock in the morning until five o'clock in the afternoon, so that they dared not advance. Had I had double the men, and only a few batteries of heavy calibre, I should have broken through this part. Only an hour and a half's walk from the field of battle, our whole army crossed over the Mincio on a few narrow bridges, without a Frenchman having ventured to pursue us. The cannons that were taken, were mostly such as were shot to pieces, and had to be abandoned, with the exception of a few solitary guns, which stood in Solferino, and of which all the men and horses lay dead on the spot. 17,000 to 18,000 dead and wounded, amongst which over 800 officers, covered the battle-field on our side. The Franco-Sardinians themselves admit that they have lost 18,000 men. There was a broiling sun withal, such as is only known in the plains of Italy, so that some men went mad from sun-stroke during the battle. I myself saw such a man, dancing about, with his coat off, in the midst of the fire from the cannons, and throwing clods of earth at the cavalry. Add to this, that many men belonging to the newly arrived detachments had scarcely descended from the waggons; moreover, that they had themselves been only just recruited, and were obliged to be taught, while still in the waggons, how to load the new sort of guns; that neither officers nor men were

acquainted with the very difficult ground of Italy, which resembles a forest of mulberry trees. Consider all this, and a good deal will be explained. Many divisions gave way, because all their officers were dead or wounded, and because they themselves hardly yet knew their own companies, and were utterly at a loss to find their way on ground which rendered all supervision impossible.

‘May the manes of the many fallen,’ so my cousin closed his sad description, ‘sometimes appear in the dreams, and disturb the night’s rest, of those who are meanwhile sitting comfortably at their writing desks, and laying political addle eggs.’

On the 25th of June, the Austrian army was in pretty nearly the same positions as it occupied on the 23rd. During the following days, it retreated, with the aid of Verona, beyond the Adige, where it managed, on the 27th, to take up a secure position, and proceed to reorganise itself. The French and the Italians still remained in their former positions, and appeared to be taking no steps to cross over the Mincio. Indecision on both sides, with regard to the attack as well as the defence, seemed to be the only thing left of the efforts and sufferings of the June days; indeed, the two Imperial leaders are said to have been personally quite exhausted by the impressions which the last battle and its terrors only too naturally produced on their sense of humanity.

In certain circles in Paris, it was asserted that Louis Napoleon had, for the last week or two, been urgently longing for peace. It was said, that he had undergone various kinds of personal dangers on the Ticino, and had been very near falling into the hands of the enemy. Such possibilities, which the war inevitably brought home to men’s minds, furnished, not only the autocrat himself, but also his adherents in Paris, with a good deal of material for meditation. They avoided telling the public, so they wrote to me from Paris, that the Emperor’s epaulet had been torn away by a bullet at Magenta, because they did not want to let the feeling arise, that Imperialism might suddenly disappear with its bearer from the surface of the canvas. ‘*Sa réputation de bravoure*

est établie maintenant, et les soldats n'aiment pas à le voir exposé.

Thus it was even talked of in the army, that the time had come for the Emperor to exhibit the fruits of his acquired glory in Paris, and quietly return home. But would it not have been very dangerous for him to transfer his command to one of the Marshals, who were so jealous of one another, with the result, perhaps, of creating a rival for himself?

For Napoleon, it seemed desirable on all sides, that the war should soon come to an end. A year after the war, I had an opportunity of hearing the Emperor speak about it himself. In Baden-Baden, where I saw him again, he made no secret to me of the fact, that he looked upon his Italian victories as the purest chance. On this occasion, he also told me that the most prodigious lies had been spread about the personal dangers he had been exposed to. '*Je n'ai jamais entendu siffler une balle.*' Notwithstanding, the war had appeared to him to be a most detestable thing: '*Le hazard y joue un trop grand rôle.*' His forces had been in the worst possible condition, and his Generals had shown no capacity for leading a large army. The Austrians, he added, had fought much better than the French, and there was no doubt that they would have taken Solferino, if the Emperor had let the reserves advance. The Emperor of Austria, he said, was a man of great eminence, *mais malheureusement il lui manque l'énergie de la volonté.* I was told, however, by other French acquaintances, that, during the battle of Solferino, Louis Napoleon had been in the unpleasant situation of suffering from a violent attack of diarrhœa, which kept him prisoner nearly the whole day, in a villa in the immediate neighbourhood. There is not the slightest doubt that Louis Napoleon was determined to end the unhappy war as quickly as possible.

Prince Chimay, who was staying in London during the time of the war, received a report from a source intimately connected with the Government, which he sent to me, and which contained, on the 14th of June, among other things the following account:

‘Il est question, que l’Empereur écrive à l’Empereur d’Autriche une lettre, taillée sur le modèle de celle envoyée par le premier Consul aux Anglais afin d’offrir la paix, et surtout de faire preuve de modération.’ [And, further on, it says in the report, that, all over the world, men were apprehensive of a universal war, which was supposed to be brewing, although the French thought quite differently on the subject]: ‘Les Français, et j’entends par là le monde officiel, s’attendent, à une nouvelle victoire, à quelques sièges, à l’expulsion des Autrichiens des Alpes à l’Adriatique, *puis d’une paix immédiate, à une extrême modération, et en un mot à la clôture du duel de la France et d’Autriche.*’

If such sentiments and intentions could be revealed after Magenta, it was surely remarkable that, after Solferino, the views as to peace were not quicker in gaining the upperhand. It is true, that the Stock Exchanges at once appeared to be discounting some such solution, but, after a good many days had elapsed, without the expected tidings of peace arriving, the course of exchange sunk again.

It was well-known, that Russia and England had offered their services in mediating peace, and that Napoleon was merely waiting for an opportunity to end the war with honour. But nobody supposed that a turn was to be expected, such as occurred a few days afterwards in Villafranca. In consequence of the latter event, the Government in Berlin lost themselves in the deepest diplomatic mire imaginable. Nothing was more significant of this, than Schleinitz’ Note of the 6th of July, in which, a few days before Villafranca, the affairs of the Confederation were discussed, and the measures adopted by the Prussian Cabinet treated of, with a thoroughness, as if the peace of Europe would shortly be dictated by the German Confederation. In the Foreign Office in Berlin, they had no idea of what was meanwhile going on in leading quarters. On the same day, Lord Palmerston had written to Russell, saying that England was on no account to have anything to do with the French conditions, as proposed by Persigny for the basis of mediation. For Palmerston found that these conditions were much too unfavourable towards Italy, and made too many concessions to the Austrians. Diplomatsists were busying

themselves at that time with the scheme of an Italian confederation, in which Venice and Modena were to be united under an Austrian Archduke. The Pope was to be at the head of this peculiar Italian unity. Lord Palmerston abhorred both these notions. '*Soyez bien sûr,*' he wrote a few days later to Persigny, '*que si l'Autriche n'est pas soigneusement exclue de toute ingérence de toute espèce dans les affaires de l'Italie, le sang français a été versé en vain, et la gloire de l'Empereur ne sera que de courte durée.*'

Napoleon, whilst in his camp in Upper Italy, possessed but little accurate knowledge of the sentiments of the mediating Powers, which were so greatly in his favour. Still, it was made exceedingly easy for him, under these circumstances, to prove to the Emperor of Austria, that his proposals and intentions were after all more favourable to Austria, than what she had to expect from England and Russia. Prussia's attitude seems altogether to have had but very slight weight, although some afterwards asserted that it had been her mobilisation which determined Napoleon to hasten the conclusion of peace, whilst others said he had managed to persuade the Emperor of Austria, that, in case of a mediation, the Prussian Government would not be willing to draw up any better conditions than England and Russia.

Thus it came to the truce, and the interview of the two Emperors in Villafranca, about which latter the European Press brought the most contradictory accounts. As for myself, only one thing was certain, as I wrote to my brother on the 13th of June, that a state of affairs was being created, 'which, at a more or less distant date, was sure to bring about complications, which neither Notes nor speeches in Parliament could remedy.'

So far as the position of things in Berlin was specially concerned, people there were surprised and disappointed. On the 4th of July, the Emperor of Austria had sent Prince Windischgrätz to Berlin, in order, at the last moment, to set a joint military action on foot. This mission seemed the best possible vindication of all the courses hitherto adopted by Prussian policy. The rumour spread, that three more army

corps were to be mobilised, and that the long expected appointment of the commanders would now definitely take place.

No doubt, Prince Windischgrätz could have no difficulty in making it clear from a military point of view, that a longer delay was impossible under all circumstances. His stirring descriptions of the sad position of Austria appeared to produce a deep impression on the Prince Regent, who was sincerely and painfully affected by the misfortunes of his kinsman's house.

As to political questions, Prince Windischgrätz was unfortunately furnished with no other instructions, than such as could be inferred from the attitude which had been assumed towards Germany for months. He knew of nothing to say in this respect, except that Austria now intended to make the motion in the Diet, of which mention has been made, for transferring the whole chief command to the Prince Regent. With this intimation he made little impression; indeed, Herr von Schleinitz took occasion in consequence, to add a highly diplomatic postscript to his circular despatch of the 6th of July, already alluded to above, in which he declared that, even in spite of this motion of Austria's, 'he must adhere to all the opinions and reasonings which he had specified in the foregoing document.'

However, on the same day, the French Ambassador, Moustier, informed Herr von Schleinitz, that the two Emperors were about to join hands across the Mincio, and conclude peace, regardless of Prussia and her mobilisation, and without the mediation of England and Russia. Soon afterwards, there followed the news of the meetings in Villafranca, and the prospects of peace. An easily conceivable excitement reigned in military and political circles in Berlin, and, although they assumed the air, as if everything had been in the best train, and as if the very fear of the mobilised six army corps had determined the Emperor Napoleon to conclude peace at any price, there could scarcely be any doubt as to Austria's behaviour allowing of a very different interpretation.

This double-dealing was all the more evident, as the

special envoy of the Emperor Francis Joseph himself in Potsdam was so surprised at the tidings of peace, that he telegraphed to Vienna, in order to obtain positive certainty as to the truth of the matter. It was no doubt a mistake on Austria's part, so seriously to offend the only friends she could possibly have. For, when the Emperor Francis Joseph said in his proclamation to the nations of Austria, that he had concluded peace, because he had been abandoned by his natural allies, they were by no means insensible to this reproach in Berlin, and were placed in a very painful position. Significant of this feeling in high quarters, is a letter which the Prince Regent wrote to me in reference to the sudden turn of events.

‘BERLIN, *July 14, 1859.*

‘But what a different aspect everything has now assumed!! There is peace, but what sort of peace! I must first of all stop my troops, which have already started on their march, then let them return to their garrisons, and finally demobilise them. Hence, also the corps which I had intended for *you*, the fifth, is affected by this measure. As it had commenced its first march on the 10th, your appointment was to have been made in these days, since it could not take place before Wrangel had received his instructions on the 11th, to concentrate the five army corps on the Rhine, whereby a position *ad interim* became open for Count Waldersee. As the fifth was, for the present, the only corps that was to be settled, I desired to offer it to you at once, leaving it to you, however, to decide whether you would assume the command immediately, or only after the outbreak of the war. I may trust that you will recognise in these arrangements my readiness to enter into your wishes, which are so flattering to the Prussian army, in whose ranks you have already so often shown that you take the military profession seriously, and where you have given proofs of your ability.

‘Now, however, everything has come to nought. But our turn will soon come; in a much more serious way, in fact, than if we had set out, in five or six weeks, with our 300,000

men from the Rhine; for, according to my conviction, the iron dies would have fallen for us, if the truce had not resulted in peace! I conclude with the proverb: Deferred for a time, is not deferred for ever.

‘Your faithful friend,

‘WILLIAM.’

When I received the foregoing letter from the Prince Regent, we were both as little prepared as the rest of the Federal Sovereigns for the extraordinary steps which the Austrian Cabinet took immediately afterwards, in order to give the most unrestrained expression that diplomatic language would allow, to her full wrath against Prussia. Count Rechberg managed, with exquisite subtlety, to clothe his accusations in a form, the confidential character of which was to enable him to express himself with the most unheard of want of consideration against Prussia.

He instructed his Ambassadors to explain, in special Notes to each separate Minister of the Federal States, the motives which had actuated the Emperor Francis Joseph in concluding the peace of Villafranca. The formula which was sent for this purpose, has now probably been made public through the newspapers. However, in order not to lose the thread of events here, I will at any rate recapitulate the main complaints which Count Rechberg was permitted to hurl at the Prussian Government.

‘Fighting for the sacredness of the treaties,’ it said in the Note of the Austrian Ambassador to my Minister von Seebach, ‘the Austrian Imperial Court was conscious of entering the lists, not only for its own rights, but in defence of a great and general interest of the congregation of European States. It believed that it possessed a well-founded claim to the sympathy and support of the Great Powers of Europe, the co-signers and guardians of the treaties. It indulged, at the same time, in the hope that Germany above all would place herself with her whole power on the side of the Empire, in defence of the authority and the possessions of the first German Power, of possessions once acquired by the same joint

struggles to which Germany owes her own independence and territorial possessions. The great majority of the Federal Governments, supported by a noble and just outburst of German national feeling, showed its appreciation of this confidence with a determination, warmth, and sincerity, for which the Imperial Court feels that its unbounded thanks are due to its confederates, and which will ever remain unforgotten by Austria's government and people. But the Cabinets of London, Berlin, and St Petersburg, judged differently. Since the commencement of the difficulty, the Vienna Court has left no stone unturned to induce these Cabinets to support its cause. All its endeavours have been without the desired effect. Still in the last days before the conclusion of the truce, the Imperial Government had to learn, that England did not yet consider the progress of French arms complete enough to warrant her in then proceeding, with any prospect of success, to make proposals for peace.*

From another Power, connected with Austria by the closest ties, the promise not to allow the territorial possessions of Austria to be prejudiced, had, at an earlier date, been claimed in vain by a Prince of the Imperial House, and, immediately before the proposals of the Emperor of the French, again by another confidential envoy of high rank. In Villafranca, at length, the Emperor obtained the certainty, that certain conditions for peace, which the Cabinet of the Tuileries had originally formulated, and communicated to London—conditions, which not only demanded heavy sacrifices from the Austrian Crown, but also expected it to desert sovereigns connected by ties of blood and friendship with the Imperial Family, and to sacrifice the rights of third parties,—that these conditions, as they appear in the enclosed draft, had met with the approval and the emphatic support of the three said Cabinets.†

* This allusion to Lord Palmerston's letter, mentioned by me above, (cf. Ashley ii, 161) was an anticipation on the part of the Austrian Government. Before the conclusion of the truce, it can only have been the generally known opinion of the English Minister which the Imperial Government had 'to learn.' The decisive letter to Persigny, however, is dated the 6th of July, and was therefore certainly not the cause of the truce.

† This draft contains the well-known seven points, with the idea of the congress, and the principle rendre l'Italie à elle-même. Napoleon, when in Villafranca, could

‘It was, therefore, certain that Austria, if she continued the struggle for the integrity of her territory, could not only promise herself no material assistance, but would even have found the moral weight of the influence of England, Prussia, and Russia, on the side of her adversaries. The Emperor, the illustrious Sovereign of the undersigned, saw himself placed before the choice, whether he, etc.

‘The Emperor has, therefore, accepted the conditions which are specified in the second enclosure.’*

At the end of the despatch, the thanks of the Imperial Cabinet were tendered to my Government for its readiness to bring sacrifices in the joint interest of Germany, it being announced, at the same time, that the motions made by Austria in the Federal Assembly on the 7th of July, were withdrawn, and that it would be proposed to reduce the contingents and fortresses of the Confederation to their normal footing in times of peace.

The accusations against Prussia expressed in the foregoing despatch, called forth, as was to be expected, a very great skirmish of diplomatic reeriminations and remonstrations, which I can truly say excited my interest in a very slight degree. I will, therefore, not weary the reader with these performances of the various Foreign Offices, but will only mention in reference to the seven points, what Usedom communicated on the subject on the 23rd of July. He considered them ‘an independent work of Lord John’s,’ which Austria had allowed to be foisted upon her, as an agreement between the three neutral Powers, without even enquiring by telegraph in Berlin, London, and St Petersburg, whether this ‘agreement’ really existed.

The conflicting tendencies among the leading statesmen of Prussia, which had been great enough before, now of course grew to an immeasurable extent. Whilst Usedom threw all the blame for the miserable result of Prussia’s operations on to Schleinitz, in the other corner of the high cabinet, Hohen-

not possibly have declared the position of the three Powers to these points to be one and the same. England and Prussia had much to find fault with in them, the former to the disadvantage, the latter to the advantage, of Austria.

* These are the well-known conditions of Villafranca.

zollern and friend Duncker were wailing, with historical erudition, at that horrid new 'Do-well' Austria, who 'had concluded a peace of Campo-Formio, before a peace of Basle was owing.' Indeed, even Prince Windischgrätz, so Duncker assured me on the 18th of July, had been intentionally made to prefer demands which were impossible of fulfilment; and this merely to enable Austria to gain a pretext for concluding the truce, which, notwithstanding the despatches of Prince Windischgrätz, entreating them 'not to conclude it, as he had the best hopes'—was signed in Villafranca.

The sharpest and most forcible expression for the desperate situation was, as usual, found by my brother, whose observations once more sounded in the sorrowful chorus of statesmen, like the deep tones of the grumbling bass:

'*C'est une perfidie de l'Autriche*, cried the French, when Austria evacuated the States of the Church, and Perugia rose up in revolt. England and Prussia are now tempted to say the same, that Austria has neither gained the victory, nor been vanquished. She has now come to an understanding with the enemy, and saved her Venetian territory. Germany ought to be heartily glad of it, and would be so, if she herself had contributed something towards this result. Prussia's situation is excessively disagreeable and dishonourable. Palmerston is furious that his victim has escaped him, and his bosom friend has led him by the nose.

'Johnny was just going to settle stately, and is left standing like a stupid fellow with mouth wide open. The blind. . . . ! They still hope for a Congress, where Italian liberty can be advocated. Austria is now safe and sound, but how Napoleon means to get out of his net of inconsistencies, I don't know. Russia is working to loosen the knot for him. For Austria, the loss of Lombardy is a gain, but her lost battles remain. . . .

'An alliance between Austria and France would be a fearful danger to Germany, would re-establish the Rhenish Confederacy, annihilate Prussia, and make Napoleon all-powerful.

'I must close, thanking you for the pamphlet: "Despots as Revolutionists." He is now no longer anything of the kind,

but is holding the Pope's stirrup, and will soon give orders to fire on the revolutionists in Italy. Mazzini bombs have just been intercepted in Milan, while he was passing through.'

Just in those days of high political excitement, our own house, and that of our friend Hohenzollern, were visited by a severe common misfortune, which was calculated to add to the general feeling one of bitter personal sorrow, and shall therefore not be left unmentioned at the close of this chapter.

The gifted young wife of the King of Portugal, Stephanie, whom we had, a short time ago, seen quit our circles for the Court of our kinsman with so many fair hopes, died on the 17th of July. In reference to this sad event, my brother closed his letter with the words.

'By the death of our dear Stephanie, which the telegraph announced to us yesterday with its heartless, but heartrending, indifference, you, too, will, I am sure, have been fearfully grieved. Poor Pedro and poor Hohenzollern are incessantly in my mind, and take away my thoughts for the moment from the great European catastrophe which lies before us.

'Ever your faithful brother,

'A.

'OSBORNE, *July* 18, 1859.'

ALPHABETICAL INDEX

—O—

A

Aberdeen, Lord, 31, 32, 37, 257
 Albert, Prince, 7, 8-12, 13, 14, 15, 21,
 22, 23, 26-31, 35, 36, 37, 38, 44, 45,
 46, 47, 50, 56, 57, 72, 73, 74, 78, 79,
 85, 86, 87, 113, 116, 118, 119, 144, 147,
 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 155, 156, 157,
 158, 160, 165, 166, 170, 171, 173, 183,
 190, 204, 213, 214, 215, 218, 220, 223,
 224, 226, 233, 234, 237, 239, 241, 242,
 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 276, 280,
 282, 283, 286, 291, 305, 306, 307, 319,
 320
 Albrecht, Archduke of Austria, 107, 300
 Alexander II, Emperor of Russia, 165,
 242
 Alice, Princess, 291
 Alvensleben, Count, Prussian Statesman,
 92, 93, 94, 121
 Apponyi, Count, Austrian Ambassador
 in Turin, 21, 22
 Arnaud, Marshal St. 138, 155
 Augusta, Princess of Prussia, afterwards
 Empress of Germany, 222, 224, 283,
 293
 Augustenburg, Crown Prince of, 233

B

Bach, Baron von, Austrian Statesman,
 109, 110, 120, 167
 Béarn, Count, French Ambassador in
 Stuttgart, 34
 Bernard, French Emigrant, 244, 245,
 257, 259
 Bernstorff, Count, Prussian Ambassador
 in London, 292
 Beust, Herr von, Saxon Statesman, 205,
 206

Billault, French Statesman, 143, 245
 Bonin, General von, Prussian Minister
 of War, 85, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 118
 Borromeo, Comte de, 269
 Borsch, Baron von, 94, 95, 96, 99, 100,
 120
 Bosquet, Marshal of France, 240
 Bourquency, Baron, French Ambassador
 in Vienna, 109, 165
 Bright, John, English Statesman, 306
 Bruck, Baron, Austrian Statesman, 167
 Brunn, Baron, Russian Ambassador in
 London, 235
 Budberg, M. de, Russian Ambassador in
 Berlin and Vienna, 43
 Bunsen, Chevalier de, Prussian Amba-
 sador in London, 85, 86, 87, 118
 Buol, Count von, Austrian Statesman.
 21, 43, 95, 96, 99, 106, 107, 120, 121,
 167, 168, 169, 172, 174, 197, 199, 200,
 239, 243, 268, 269, 288, 290, 298

C

Cabarrus, Thérèse, 71,
 Cambridge, George, Duke of, 72, 98, 138,
 156, 161
 Canrobert, General, 138, 155, 170
 Cavaignac, General, 5
 Cavour, Count, Italian Statesman, 231,
 236, 237, 243, 257, 261, 263, 268, 274,
 286, 287, 297
 Charles, Prince of Prussia, 34, 89
 Charles, Prince of Bavaria, 108
 Charlotte, Princess of Belgium, after-
 wards Empress of Mexico, 226
 Chimay, Prince, Belgian Ambassador in
 Paris, 71, 137, 138, 139, 142, 145, 151,
 159, 161, 192, 207, 209, 229, 231, 236,
 238, 239, 245, 254, 256, 257, 262, 267,
 269, 270, 274, 287, 297, 302, 311

Clarendon, Lord, English Statesman, 22, 31, 239, 241, 243
 Clotilde, Princess, 263
 Constantine, Grand Duke of Russia, 239, 240
 Conway, Vicomte de, 57
 Cowley, Lord, British Ambassador in Paris, 74, 137, 282, 297
 Cruvelli, Sophia, Prima Donna, 74

D

Delangle, Claude Alphonse, French Statesman, 273
 Derby, Lord, English Statesman, 14, 171, 258, 259, 308
 Disraeli, Benjamin, afterwards Lord Beaconsfield, English Statesman, 171, 172
 Dohna, Count, Prussian Fieldmarshal, 90
 Drouin de L'Huys, Edouard, French Statesman, 168, 170
 Duncker, Professor Max, 319

E

Elizabeth, Queen of Prussia, 116
 D'Enghien, Duke, 74
 Espinasse, Esprit Charles, General, 146, 254, 256
 Esterhazy, Count, Austrian Ambassador in St Petersburg, 121, 200, 201
 Eugénie de Montijo, afterwards Empress of the French, 24, 25, 58, 59, 60, 61, 72, 77, 170, 241, 250, 252, 274

F

Favre, Jules, French Statesman, 255
 Ferdinand, King of Portugal, 227, 228
 Ferdinand, Duke of Genoa, 28, 29
 Fleury, Emil Felix, General, 249
 Francis, Joseph, Emperor of Austria, 34, 84, 95, 96, 97, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 108, 114, 115, 132, 154, 167, 173, 198, 203, 242, 266, 297, 298, 302, 303, 304, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318
 Frederick William IV, King of Prussia, 34, 35, 44, 50, 51, 55, 63, 68, 69, 70, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87, 89, 90, 92, 103, 104, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 132, 133, 134, 162, 163, 165, 176, 179, 202, 204, 206, 215, 275
 Frederick William, Prince of Prussia, afterwards Emperor Frederick, 214, 215, 220, 222, 223, 224, 238, 245, 279

G

Garibaldi, Guiseppe, 306
 George V, King of Hanover, 29

Gerlaeche, Herr von, Belgian Statesman, 218
 Gladstone, W. E., English Statesman, 21, 171
 Gortschakoff, Prince Alexander, Russian Statesman, 34, 121, 141, 160, 172
 Gortschakoff, Prince Michael, Russian General, 33, 189
 Grey, Lord, 172
 Groeben, General von, 70, 83
 Gruenne, Count, Austrian Lieutenant-Field-Marshal, 298, 299
 Gruenwaldde, Russian Lieut.-General, 98
 Gyulai, Count, 300, 301

H

Hess, Austrian Field Marshal, 98, 106, 107, 108, 121, 166, 302, 304, 308
 Hohenzollern, Karl Anton, Prince of, Prussian Minister-President, 55, 69, 83, 226, 286, 294, 302, 303, 319, 320
 Huebner, Herr von, Austrian Ambassador in Paris, 197, 266, 267, 268, 269, 272
 Humboldt, Alexander von, 116

J

Jellacic, Austrian General, 98
 Jerome, Bonaparte, King of Westphalia, 59, 71, 143
 Jerome, Bonaparte, Prince, 46, 47, 231, 252, 262, 263, 273, 297

K

Kossuth, Louis, 256

L

Leiningen, Count, 32
 Leopold, I, King of the Belgians, 4, 16, 20, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 55, 70, 78, 79, 80, 111, 160, 217, 218, 219, 254, 258, 262, 264, 268, 270, 271, 278, 279, 293
 Leopold II, King of the Belgians, 25
 Leopold, Prince, afterwards Duke of Albany, 30, 73
 Lieven, Dorothea, Princess, 80, 159
 Lindheim, von, Prussian General, 55
 Louis Napoleon, afterwards Emperor of the French, 4, 8, 22, 25, 33, 34, 36, 44, 46, 47, 55, 80, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 122, 139, 140, 142, 145, 150, 151, 152, 154, 159, 162, 169, 170, 176, 177, 186, 187, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 199, 201, 202, 204, 207, 209, 229, 230, 232, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 248, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 256, 257, 258, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 266, 267, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 280, 281, 282, 286, 287, 288, 291, 293, 296, 298, 300, 301, 305, 306, 307, 308, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 317, 319, 320

Louis, King of Portugal, 227
 Louis Philippe, King of France, 60, 73
 Louisa, Princess of Prussia, afterwards
 Grand Duchess of Baden, 215, 219

M

Malmesbury, Lord, 257, 286, 292
 Malakoff, Duke of, see Pélissier
 Manteuffel, Minister, 67, 87, 88, 89, 90,
 91, 117, 118, 121, 124, 133, 134, 203
 Manteuffel, Colonel von, 114, 115
 Maria, Queen of Portugal, 26, 73
 Matilda, Princess Bonaparte, 59
 Maurand, Captain, 58
 Max Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria,
 afterwards Emperor of Mexico, 99,
 226, 227
 Mazzini, Guiseppe, 244
 Mensdorf, Count Alexander, afterwards
 Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs,
 309, 310
 Mentschikoff, General, 32, 33, 155
 Merimée, Prosper, 267
 Metternich, Prince, 16, 17, 45, 111,
 112
 Meyerbeer, Giacomo, composer, 192
 Meyendorf, M. de, 98, 121
 Montessay, M. de, 268
 Montpensier, Duke of, 73
 Morny, Duke of, 19, 143, 231
 Moustier, Marquis de, French Amba-
 sador in Berlin, 314
 Münster, Count, 187
 Murat, Prince, 59

N

Napier, Sir Charles, British Admiral,
 137
 Napoleon, I, 59, 63, 276
 Napoleon III, see Louis Napoleon
 Nemours, Louis, Duke of, 23
 Nesselrode, Count, Russian Chancellor,
 121, 123, 160
 Nicholas I, Emperor of Russia, 1, 2, 4,
 32, 33, 34, 35, 40, 42, 43, 44, 48, 56, 57,
 79, 80, 84, 94, 98, 102, 111, 119, 134,
 163, 164, 270
 Nicholas, Prince of Nassau, 233, 235
 Noer, Frederick, Prince of, 178

O

Oliphant, Mr, 31
 Omer Pasha, Turkish General, 33, 141,
 164
 Orleans Family, 23, 47
 Orloff, Count, Russian Statesman, 43,
 120
 Orsini, Count Felix, 244, 255, 256, 259

P

Palmerston, Lord, English Statesman,
 13, 14, 24, 31, 37, 38, 147, 158, 167,
 171, 192, 230, 235, 238, 239, 241, 257,
 259, 291, 293, 306, 312, 313, 317, 319
 Panuzzi, M. de, 267
 Paskiewitch, Iwan Fedorowitch, Russian
 General, 141
 Pedro, King of Portugal, 226, 227, 228,
 320
 Peel, Sir Robert, English Statesman, 8, 9
 Pélissier, Duke of Malakoff, French
 Ambassador in London, 170, 171, 187,
 189
 Persigny, Duke of, French Statesman,
 143, 312, 313, 317
 Pierri, 254, 255, 256
 Pietri, Police Director in Paris, 248, 251,
 256
 Pius IX, Pope, 273, 313
 Pourtales, Count, Prussian Ambassador
 in Paris, 303
 Praedt, Jules de, 57

R

Raglan, Lord, English Field-Marshal,
 138, 186
 Radetzky, Count, Austrian Field-Marshal,
 98
 Rechberg, Count, Austrian Ambassador
 at the German Diet, 303, 316, 317
 Reschid, Pasha, 36
 Reuss, Prince, Prussian Ambassador, 274
 Revel, M. de, Sardinian Ambassador in
 Vienna, 21, 22
 Roguet, French General, 58, 252
 Rothschild, Paris Banker, 70
 Russell, Lord John, English Statesman,
 31, 158, 165, 167, 172, 306, 312, 318

S

Samwer, Privy Councillor in Coburg,
 50
 Sardinia, King of, 263, 296
 Schleinitz, Baron Alexander, Prussian
 Statesman, 312, 314, 318
 Seebach, Herr von, 26, 28, 316
 Seymour, Sir G. Hamilton, British
 Diplomat, 1, 2,
 Simpson, General, 186
 Stadion, Austrian General, 301
 Stephanie, Princess of Hohenzollern,
 afterwards Queen of Portugal, 226,
 227, 228, 320
 Stephanie, Grand-Duchess, 59
 Stockmar, Baron, 15, 27, 28, 85, 214,
 233, 258
 Stratford de Redcliffe, Lord, British
 Minister in Constantinople, 33

U

Usedom, Guido von, Prussian Ambassador
at the German Diet, 124, 126, 318

V

Vaillant, Marshal of France, 58, 251
Victor Immanuel, King of Italy, 243,
286, 287
Victoria, Queen of England, 29, 37, 38,
57, 70, 72, 74, 83, 118, 119, 170, 176,
178, 190, 215, 239, 241, 257, 260, 291,
293, 306
Victoria, Princess Royal, 213, 215, 220,
223, 238, 245, 281

W

Waldersee, Count, Prussian General, 88,
315

Walewski, Count, French Statesman,
171, 235, 258, 269, 274, 297
Wedell, Prussian Lieutenant-General,
124, 132, 134, 162, 163
Wellington, Duke of, 14
Werthern, Baron, 121, 204
Westmoreland, Lord, English Diplomat,
22, 106, 109, 118, 218
William, Prince of Prussia, afterwards
Emperor of Germany, 11, 29, 30, 85,
87, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 108, 124, 128,
129, 130, 131, 174, 202, 221, 276, 282,
285, 289, 290, 292, 293, 303, 304, 314,
315, 316
William, Prince of Prussia, afterwards
Emperor William II, 282
William, Prince Regent of Baden, 183,
215, 219
William, Duke of Brunswick, 99
Willisen, Prussian General, 302, 303, 304,
305
Windischgrätz, Prince, 98, 313, 314,
315, 319
Wrangel, Prussian General, 163, 315

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